HEARING 4/19/2021

Page 1

1 2	BEFORE THE ILLINOIS SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE
3	SOUTHWESTERN ILLINOIS
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5	Hearing held, pursuant to notice, on the 19th
6	day of April, 2021, between the hours of 5:00 p.m.
7	and 6:40 p.m. via Zoom teleconference.
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                     APPEARANCES
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    COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:
    Senator Christopher Belt, Chairperson
     Senator Rachelle Crowe
    Senator Steve McClure
     Senator Jason Plummer
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    Senator Doris Turner
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    Representative Jay Hoffman, Co-Chairperson
    Representative Tim Butler, Republican Spokesperson
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    Representative Theresa Mah, Member
    Representative Dave Severin, Member
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    Representative LaToya Greenwood
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    Representative Katie Stuart
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21
    Court Reporter
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    Lydia Pinkawa, CSR
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    Alaris Litigation Services
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    St. Louis, Missouri 63101
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1 CHAIRPERSON BELT: This meeting of the Senate 2 redistricting subcommittee on southwestern Illinois 3 is called to order. Clerk, please take the roll. THE CLERK: Senator McClure. 4 5 SENATOR McCLURE: Present. THE CLERK: Senator Plummer. SENATOR PLUMMER: Present. 8 THE CLERK: Senator Turner. 9 SENATOR TURNER: Present. 10 THE CLERK: Senator Crowe. 11 SENATOR CROWE: Present. 12 THE CLERK: Chair Belt. 13 CHAIRPERSON BELT: Present. There being a quorum 14 present, the following entities are seeking leave to 15 photograph and video the proceedings. Blue Stream; 16 Mark Maxwell, WCIA; Justin Ackerman, KTVI; and Derik 17 Holtmann, Belleville News-Democrat. If I could get everyone to put their Zoom on mute, that should take 18 19 care of the background noise. Thank you. 2.0 Is there leave? Leave is granted. Senator 2.1 Crowe for a motion. 22 SENATOR CROWE: Thank you, Chair Belt. I move 23 that the hearing be transcribed by the court reporter 24 so that the committee can have a full transcript of

- 1 this hearing, which the redistricting committee can
- 2 approve at a future hearing once members and staff
- 3 have had an opportunity to review the transcript and
- 4 make any needed corrections.
- 5 CHAIRPERSON BELT: Senator Crowe moves to allow a
- 6 court reporter to transcribe the hearing. Is there
- 7 leave? Leave being granted, the court reporter will
- 8 be allowed to transcribe the hearing. With that
- 9 being said, we're going to allow 30 seconds for Blue
- 10 Stream to be able to fill in the delay and then we'll
- 11 proceed with the hearing.
- 12 I now turn to Leader Hoffman to call the
- 13 House redistricting committee to order.
- 14 REPRESENTATIVE HOFFMAN: Thank you, Senator.
- 15 The House redistricting committee shall come to
- 16 order. I would just announce, because we are in
- 17 recess, there is no need for a roll call. I would
- 18 just announce the representatives who are here and if
- 19 we could at a later time, if they would like to say a
- 20 few words, I would appreciate that.
- We have the representative from this
- 22 district, LaToya, Representative LaToya Greenwood.
- 23 All the way from the Chicago area, Representative
- 24 Theresa Mah, who is also a member with me on the

- 1 House redistricting committee. We have, representing
- 2 the district just to the north of us, Representative
- 3 Katie Stuart. And we have the minority spokesperson
- 4 on the committee from Springfield, Representative Tim
- 5 Butler. And we have Representative Dave Severin who
- 6 is from a little bit south of us. Back to you,
- 7 Senator.
- 8 CHAIRPERSON BELT: Thank you, Leader Hoffman.
- 9 As the Senate redistricting committee receives any
- 10 written only testimony, that testimony will be made
- 11 part of the committee record and posted on the
- 12 redistricting committee's ILGA web site. The
- 13 subcommittee covers the following counties: Calhoun,
- 14 Jersey, Madison, St. Clair and Monroe counties, which
- includes districts currently represented by Senators
- 16 McClure, Crowe, Plummer, Turner, Bryant and myself.
- 17 I will start with an opening statement. If Senator
- 18 Plummer has any opening remarks, we will go to those.
- 19 Then we will turn to our testimony for today.
- 20 Good evening. It is my pleasure to welcome
- 21 you to this joint southwestern Illinois redistricting
- 22 hearing between the Illinois House and Senate. This
- 23 is one of numerous public hearings the Senate
- 24 redistricting committee and the House redistricting

- 1 committee is holding to gather input from communities
- 2 of interest across Illinois as we work to create a
- 3 fair map that reflects the geographic and racial
- 4 diversity of our state. It's an honor to be here
- 5 with our House colleagues tonight. And I'd like to
- 6 give special thanks to the Jackie Joyner-Kersee
- 7 Center for hosting us.
- 8 The Illinois constitution requires the
- 9 general assembly to undergo the redistricting process
- 10 every ten years to make sure our communities receive
- 11 fair and equal representation. The population of
- 12 Illinois is constantly changing. We all know that
- 13 our region of the state looks very different than it
- 14 did a decade ago. Our goal today is to learn about
- 15 those changes so that nobody is overlooked.
- 16 For those unable to provide testimony
- 17 today, you can visit our web site,
- 18 www.ILSenateRedistricting.com, where you can
- 19 submit comments and concerns and find more detailed
- 20 information about the redistricting process. We are
- 21 focused on encouraging as much public participation
- 22 as possible. And on that site you can even draft and
- 23 submit your own proposed legislation -- legislative
- 24 boundary maps which will be reviewed as part of the

- 1 public record.
- 2 Historically, states have used data from the
- 3 U.S. Census Bureau to craft maps. Unfortunately, a
- 4 delay caused by the pandemic means the Census Bureau
- 5 is unlikely to get such data to the state until late
- 6 August or September. That's caused concern
- 7 nationwide, including here in Illinois. You see,
- 8 while the Illinois constitution does not require
- 9 census data for redistricting, our constitution is
- 10 very clear that we have a June 30th deadline to
- 11 complete this process. The means -- this means we
- 12 cannot put off this process until census data is
- 13 released, as some have argued we should.
- 14 Here's what's at stake. If the general
- assembly misses the June 30th deadline, map making
- 16 will be turned over to a commission of political
- 17 insiders. The public will be cut out of the process
- 18 entirely. This is not an independent commission, as
- 19 some have wrongly claimed. It is a commission of
- 20 political appointees named by legislative leaders.
- 21 That's not democracy. That's a disservice to the
- 22 people we represent.
- 23 The only way to ensure fair mapping is to
- 24 allow for greater public participation, not less.

- 1 That's why we are here today. We want to hear from
- 2 our communities because we know that no matter what
- 3 data is used in map making, data will only tell part
- 4 of the story. That's especially true when it comes
- 5 to the hard to count communities, including those who
- 6 are low income, racial and ethnic minorities,
- 7 renters, homeless, LGBTQ and children and youth. I
- 8 appreciate those who took the time to be here tonight
- 9 and I look forward to your testimony. Thank you.
- 10 Senator Plummer.
- 11 SENATOR PLUMMER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And
- 12 thank you to the Jackie Joyner-Kersee Center for
- 13 hosting this hearing and also to everyone who will be
- 14 participating today. This is our 16th redistricting
- 15 hearing in the last several weeks. And while
- 16 participation has been limited, we are hearing from
- 17 witnesses from across the state that there must be
- 18 more transparency in this process.
- These witnesses have requested more robust
- 20 public engagement, which includes slowing the process
- 21 down. Despite what my colleagues might claim, we
- 22 don't have to pass a map by June 30th. The real
- 23 constitutional deadline is very clear and it is
- October 5th. The last date politicians get to draw

1 the map is June 30th. Let me be very clear. 2 only people concerned about June 30th and providing 3 misleading information about that supposed deadline are those very politicians who want to use this 4 process as a way to empower themselves to the 5 6 detriment of their constituents. 7 Extending the time period would allow us to 8 use the actual census data, not the ACS data that is 9 just a small sampling of the population. 10 from around the country acknowledge that the ACS data is not as near as accurate as the census data. 11 12 use of this data has the potential to disenfranchise voters and communities, especially several 13 communities of color that have changed dramatically 14 15 over the past ten years in certain parts of the state 16 of Illinois. This would be like basing our election 17 results on inaccurate poll numbers rather than truly counting the votes. 18 19 It has been falsely claimed that the 2.0 Republicans want these hearings stopped. That has 2.1 absolutely no basis in truth. In fact, Republicans 22 along with independent groups from across Illinois 23 have asked for even more hearings than are currently 24 scheduled. What we should do is stop cramming all

- 1 these hearings and all of this very important
- 2 decision making into a few weeks. Instead, we should
- 3 ensure the public has ample time to arrange their
- 4 schedules and participate in a truly meaningful
- 5 manner. Voters want this process to lead to more
- 6 choices at the ballot box. They want more
- 7 competition in elections. Instead, politicians could
- 8 use this process to simply protect their own
- 9 interests.
- The Senate Republicans are committed to
- 11 obtaining a bipartisan solution to the problem of
- 12 politicians picking their voters, and so we
- introduced the Peoples' Independent Maps Act. Senate
- 14 Bill 1325 uses identical language from an amendment
- 15 that was proposed by Senator Julie Morrison in 2019
- 16 and garnered 37 co-sponsors in the Senate, including
- 17 18 of her fellow Democrats. A similar independent
- 18 commission amendment co-sponsored by Speaker Welch
- 19 passed the house in 2016 with 105 yes votes. The
- 20 Peoples' Independent Map Act would take the
- 21 politicians, like everyone sitting at this table,
- 22 out of the map drawing process.
- 23 An independent redistricting commission has
- 24 long been supported by Governor Pritzker and more

- 1 than a hundred members of the legislature, including
- 2 75 members of the other side of the aisle. We took
- 3 great care to introduce this legislation exactly as
- 4 it was when we had so much support from both parties.
- 5 We wanted to ensure it would be a bipartisan solution
- 6 to the real problem we have in Illinois of
- 7 politicians consistently picking their voters rather
- 8 than voters picking their politicians.
- 9 We look forward to further testimony from the
- 10 witnesses and a discussion with the members of this
- 11 committee on how we can help bring true change and
- 12 real transparency to this very important process.
- 13 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
- 14 CHAIRPERSON BELT: Thank you, Senator Plummer. I
- 15 now turn back to Leader Hoffman for opening remarks.
- 16 REPRESENTATIVE HOFFMAN: Thank you, Senator. And
- 17 I will attempt to be brief because I know you covered
- 18 much of the items that the House Democrats would have
- 19 brought forward. But the House Democrats have been
- 20 dedicated to transparency and public participation in
- 21 the redistricting process. While state law requires
- 22 a minimum of four public hearings throughout the
- 23 state, our committee has held around 24 of them. Our
- 24 goal is to hear from as many people as possible. Our

- 1 staff has been making hundreds of phone calls to
- 2 encourage participation. Those who wish to
- 3 participate have been given an opportunity, period.
- 4 In addition, we have held a series of virtual
- 5 hearings because of the COVID-19 crisis. This, I
- 6 believe, is one of the only, first and only
- 7 House-Senate joint hearings and I appreciate Senator
- 8 Belt as well as Representative Greenwood hosting us.
- 9 While we are guided in the endeavor by the
- 10 United States constitution, the Federal Voting Rights
- 11 Act, the Illinois constitution and the Illinois
- 12 Voting Rights Act, we're also interested in any
- 13 relevant demographic information such as social,
- 14 political, economic, religious or any other
- 15 characteristics that are unique to our community.
- 16 As you know, Representative Stuart, Representative
- 17 Greenwood and I as well as Senator Belt and Senator
- 18 Crowe are proud to represent this area, as is Senator
- 19 Plummer.
- This year for the first time, Illinois
- 21 residents will be able to participate in the process
- 22 from the comfort of their own homes. They have
- 23 participated. The public drawing portal where you
- 24 can draw your own maps is available at the Illinois

- 1 HouseDems.com, slash, Redistricting, that's Illinois
- 2 HouseDems.com, slash, Redistricting portal and allows
- 3 any Illinois resident to draw districts, share those
- 4 maps with the committees for consideration. The
- 5 public may also submit written testimony, as Senator
- 6 Belt indicated, and that can be provided by e-mail to
- 7 RedistrictingCommittee@HDS.ILGA.gov. All written
- 8 testimony, public comments and maps submitted will be
- 9 made publicly available and part of the trans -- and
- 10 the transcripts and be made part of the record.
- 11 As for today, we will begin, I think turning
- 12 it over, back over to Senator Belt after there's a
- 13 brief statement from Representative LaToya Greenwood
- 14 and then from minority spokesperson Tim Butler.
- 15 Representative Greenwood.
- 16 REPRESENTATIVE GREENWOOD: Thank you, Leader
- 17 Hoffman, and thank you, Senator Belt, Chair. We are
- 18 here this evening to ensure that communities like
- 19 East St. Louis have their seat at the table, making
- 20 our voices heard in this extremely important
- 21 discussion on redistricting. Thank you to those who
- 22 are here in person from all over the 114th district
- 23 and other area districts and thank you to those who
- 24 are online for staying engaged in these very

- 1 important conversations. To my colleagues, welcome
- 2 to the 114th district. Thank you.
- 3 REPRESENTATIVE HOFFMAN: Leader Butler.
- 4 REPRESENTATIVE BUTLER: Thank you, Leader
- 5 Hoffman, and thank you, Representative Greenwood, for
- 6 hosting this evening and Senator Belt for hosting
- 7 this evening. I'm glad to be here in East St. Louis
- 8 for this important hearing tonight and such an
- 9 important part of our state in southwestern Illinois.
- 10 This is a great area of our state and glad we could
- 11 be on the road tonight to listen to folks in this
- 12 area of the state.
- 13 Let me just say, just respond to a few of the
- 14 things that have been said. The only way to ensure
- 15 that citizens have a role in actually drawing the
- 16 maps, not having necessarily the input here tonight,
- 17 which is great, but actually drawing the lines of the
- 18 map is to go to a commission form of process. If we
- 19 pass maps, if we, the legislature passes maps by
- June 30th, that means the legislature, the
- 21 politicians will be drawing the lines, taking care
- 22 of themselves as we have often done in the past to
- 23 ensure maximum partisan advantage in the
- 24 redistricting process and that's what would happen.

1 The constitution does not say -- does not 2 spell out the reasons why the legislature should go 3 past the June 30 deadline. It doesn't say just 4 purely for you don't have the votes in the chamber or 5 the fact that the governor and the legislature of 6 different parties, which has happened in the past, 7 but the constitution has had the foresight to realize 8 we might have issues in drawing our legislative 9 boundaries by June 30. 10 Today's issue, this year's issue is the 11 census delay. And the census data that we need, the 12 decennial census granular data to go down to the 13 block level won't come out until at least August, if 14 not September. The use of other data, American 15 Community Survey data, other private data potentially 16 will not truly represent the state of Illinois. 17 have had, I think this is 24 or 25 hearings in the House. We've had multiple people testify over the 18 19 last several weeks that ACS data undercounts minority 20 populations, undercounts rural populations. 2.1 that's vitally important for us to realize, that if 22 we use data that is not the data that we have used in 23 the past every time to draw the maps under this 24 constitution, that we would be doing it wrong.

- 1 And let me remind folks that we have gone
- 2 through this, the legislative redistricting
- 3 commission and constitution, I think three of the
- 4 last four times we have drawn the maps. The only
- 5 time that we have used the legislature to draw the
- 6 map was ten years ago where the majority drew maps
- 7 and then it was signed by Governor Quinn and we have
- 8 the districts that we have today.
- 9 So you know, we have real concerns about the
- 10 ACS data, interested in hearing what people have here
- 11 to say tonight and I look forward to an engaging
- 12 hearing. Thank you.
- 13 REPRESENTATIVE HOFFMAN: Senator, back to you.
- 14 CHAIRPERSON BELT: Thank you, Leader Hoffman.
- 15 We're just going to pause.
- 16 REPRESENTATIVE HOFFMAN: We're going to now go to
- 17 a short presentation that describes the redistricting
- 18 process that is put together by the House Democratic
- 19 staff.
- 20 MR. REINHARDT: My name is Darrin Reinhardt.
- 21 I'm an employee with the Illinois House of
- 22 Representatives and I'm here to give a brief overview
- 23 of the state's redistricting procedure. I'll briefly
- 24 discuss the background of redistricting and the

- 1 redistricting process in Illinois and I'll also be
- 2 going over federal and state redistricting
- 3 requirements and guidelines. Finally, we'll be
- 4 looking at what preliminary data reveals about
- 5 population trends in the state and region.
- 6 Redistricting is the process that ensures all
- 7 Illinois residents are afforded equal representation
- 8 in the state legislature and federal Congress as
- 9 guaranteed by the United States constitution. The
- 10 U.S. Supreme Court held a series of rulings in the
- 11 1960's that congressional and state legislative
- 12 districts in each state must be of approximately
- 13 equal population, establishing the principle of one
- 14 person, one vote. As a result, states redraw their
- 15 congressional and state districts every ten years to
- 16 reflect changes in population.
- 17 The timeline for redrawing the legislative
- 18 maps are based on the Illinois constitution. The
- 19 constitution gives the Illinois legislature the
- 20 initial responsibility of passing the new legislative
- 21 map. Both the state House and the state Senate must
- 22 pass a plan which then must be signed by the
- 23 governor.
- If a new map does not go into effect by the

- 1 constitutional deadline of June 30th, responsibility
- 2 for creating a new map passes from the legislature
- 3 to a legislative redistricting commission. The
- 4 commission would consist of eight members, with two
- 5 appointed by a legislative leader and no more than
- 6 four from the same political party. A majority vote
- 7 of five or more commission members would constitute
- 8 final approval of a new map.
- 9 However, if the commission does not agree to
- 10 a map by September 1st, the Illinois Supreme Court
- 11 will submit two names, one from each party, to the
- 12 Illinois secretary of state, who will then choose one
- 13 name at random to serve as the ninth member of the
- 14 commission. Five of the nine members of the
- 15 commission must agree to a plan no later than
- 16 October 5th.
- 17 In order to understand the process of
- 18 creating new districts, we must look at some legal
- 19 quiding principles. First among these is equal
- 20 population. Congressional districts must be nearly
- 21 equal in population, while state districts must be
- 22 substantially equal. Federal and state law also
- 23 requires that all districts be contiquous, which
- 24 means that all parts of a district must be next to

- 1 each other unless connected by water. Annexations
- 2 and unincorporated areas and municipalities and
- 3 counties sometimes mean that communities are
- 4 discontiguous. However, congressional and state
- 5 districts must be adjacent or connected at all
- 6 points.
- 7 A more difficult requirement to define is
- 8 compactness. There are at least 30 different
- 9 scientific ways to measure how compact a district is,
- 10 but no statute or court precedent identifies standard
- 11 criteria of compactness. In theory, compactness
- 12 focuses on the shape of a district's boundaries, how
- 13 spread out a district is from a central core or where
- 14 the district's population center of gravity is. In
- 15 practice, compactness is hindered by geography and on
- 16 the ground realities, so often interpretation of
- 17 compactness involves more than a visual test.
- 18 Illinois is one of 14 states that nests its
- 19 House districts, also called represented districts,
- 20 inside one of its Senate districts, also called
- 21 legislative districts. Map makers will look, where
- 22 possible, to follow existing political and geological
- 23 boundaries in ways that maximize the community's
- 24 opportunity to have its interests represented. As

- 1 you know, however, county, municipality, township and
- 2 natural geographic boundaries are not always compact
- 3 or contiquous.
- 4 By studying population data and holding
- 5 public hearings like this to listen to the thoughts
- of residents across the state, law makers look to
- 7 identify what are known as communities of interest.
- 8 A community of interest is a group of people
- 9 concentrated in a geographic area who are socially,
- 10 culturally, ethnically, economically, religiously or
- 11 otherwise alike can be joined in a district to most
- 12 effectively have their voices heard. The factors
- 13 contributing to any particular community of interest
- 14 will vary throughout the state.
- 15 Federal law requires redistricting plans to
- 16 reflect minority representation. The principles of
- 17 the federal Voting Rights Act are in place to prevent
- 18 the reduction of opportunities for minority
- 19 populations to participate equally in the electoral
- 20 process. However, districts cannot be drawn solely
- 21 on the basis of race.
- 22 Illinois also protects representation of
- 23 racial and language minority groups. The Illinois
- 24 Voting Rights Act helps to prevent minority

fracturing or dividing a concentration of minorities

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- 2 among two or more districts by requiring map makers 3 to consider creating crossover district, coalition districts or influence districts. A crossover 4 5 district is one in which a large minority group can 6 elect the candidate of its choice with the help of 7 voters from the majority group. Coalition districts bring multiple racial or language minority groups 8 9 together to elect a candidate of their choice. 10 influence district allows a group to influence the election outcome without being the majority 11 12 population in a district. These state law 13 requirements come into play only after compliance
- 15 constitutional requirements on redistricting.

with the federal law and U.S. and state

- In addition, the law ensures transparency and
- 17 public participation by requiring public hearings
- 18 across the state, one of which we are having here
- 19 right now. At the end of the presentation, we will
- 20 display an e-mail address on the screen Leader
- 21 Hoffman already provided where you can submit your
- 22 ideas. The committee will also be accepting written
- 23 testimony today.
- Now that we've covered the redistricting

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- 1 process, let us discuss what preliminary data shows
- 2 about Illinois' population. The U.S. Census Bureau
- 3 has delayed much of the release of the decennial
- 4 census data by more than six months until this fall.
- 5 However, the U.S. Census Bureau's annual population
- 6 estimates show some trends that can help inform the
- 7 work ahead.
- 8 The census 2019 population estimates shows an
- 9 overall decline in state population over the past
- 10 decade. There are, however, areas that are projected
- 11 to have population gain. Communities with the
- 12 largest population by percentage increase since 2010
- 13 are Kendall, Monroe, Champaign and Kane counties.
- 14 Demographically speaking, the state's white
- 15 population is projected to decline, while
- 16 African-American population statewide will likely see
- 17 a smaller overall decline. The Hispanic and Asian
- 18 population across Illinois are projected to see
- 19 growth.
- Locally, Madison County, St. Clair County are
- 21 projected to lose population. St. Clair's white and
- 22 African-American populations will likely decrease,
- 23 while Hispanic population stands to increase. In
- 24 Madison County, white population is projected to

- 1 decline, while African-American and Hispanic
- 2 populations will likely grow.
- 3 Thank you so much for your attention and for
- 4 coming out to share your thoughts today. As the
- 5 Chair mentioned, you will be able to find testimony
- 6 from this and other hearings on ILGA.gov and on
- 7 ILHouseDems.com, slash, Redistricting. The
- 8 redistricting web site offers additional ways to
- 9 engage with the process, including our public drawing
- 10 portal where you can draw and submit your own
- 11 district maps. You can send further written
- 12 testimony and suggestions to the committee at any
- 13 time by e-mailing Redistricting Committee at
- 14 HDS.ILGA.gov. Thank you.
- 15 REPRESENTATIVE HOFFMAN: Senator Belt.
- 16 CHAIRPERSON BELT: Thank you, Leader. Our first
- 17 witness today will be the mayor of East St. Louis,
- 18 Robert Eastern. Mayor, I would ask that you come to
- 19 the witness table and when you get there, un-mute
- 20 yourself before you start your testimony.
- 21 Go ahead, Mayor.
- 22 MAYOR EASTERN: So first of all, I want to say
- 23 thank you for the opportunity of allowing us to
- 24 speak -- for me to speak on behalf of the city of

- 1 East St. Louis. I would like to make sure that
- 2 there's special consideration in relationship to this
- 3 redistricting in our area. You know, we have an
- 4 insurmountable thing, this is the first time in
- 5 100 years we got hit with the COVID-19, have an
- 6 inability to be able to affect the census here in our
- 7 area, enhanced practice as far as being able to reach
- 8 out to those people that is always undercounted. We
- 9 understand here in our community that, in the black
- 10 and brown community more specifically, that we tend
- 11 to get undercounted when the census, when it's time
- 12 for census. We did have a good push.
- I would be remiss if I didn't say that I
- 14 think that there should be some special consideration
- 15 for the East St. Louis area as well as St. Clair
- 16 County, you know, in relationship to the census. You
- 17 know, we understand that the impact that it will have
- 18 on the city, it will be very traumatic if it's
- 19 anything other than what we are used to as far as
- 20 like home rule and things of that nature, the public
- 21 funding for educational systems, the streets and
- 22 roads, the sewers and the overall ambience of trying
- 23 to get people to come in and do development in this
- 24 area as well. So I implore upon this committee, this

- 1 hearing committee to take that in consideration and I
- 2 could take any questions at this time.
- 3 CHAIRPERSON BELT: Mayor Eastern, we thank you
- 4 for your testimony. At this time we're going to
- 5 proceed with the witness testimony. Thank you, sir.
- 6 MAYOR EASTERN: Thank you.
- 7 CHAIRPERSON BELT: Before I proceed to the next
- 8 witness, just to make sure that we're doing our due
- 9 diligence, were there any questions for Mayor
- 10 Eastern? Hearing none, next, our second witness
- 11 today is Stanley W. Franklin, second vice president
- 12 of the NAACP for the state of Illinois and the
- 13 president of East St. Louis branch of the NAACP.
- 14 Please proceed.
- MR. FRANKLIN: To the Chair of this committee,
- 16 Chairman Christopher Belt, to the other senators and
- 17 to my representative, LaToya Greenwood and all those
- 18 who assembled here this evening, good evening. My
- 19 name is Stanley Franklin. I am the second vice
- 20 president of the Illinois state conference which
- 21 consists of 35 branches throughout the state of
- 22 Illinois and I'm also the president of the East
- 23 St. Louis branch NAACP.
- 24 I would like to address three areas of

- 1 primary concerns that we have with redistricting
- 2 process. One is transparency. Two is the Illinois
- 3 Voting Right Act of 2011. Three is the attempt to
- 4 gerrymandering black votes.
- 5 We want transparency in the process of
- 6 refining the political boundaries of representatives,
- 7 senators and congressional districts. We want a
- 8 chance for input before the final map is decided
- 9 and not after it's finalized, but the draft.
- 10 Transparency will restore the confidence in the
- 11 government.
- We believe that the Illinois Voting Right Act
- of 2011 is a fair redistricting process for all race
- 14 minorities. It is properly -- when it's properly
- 15 implemented. The law encourages law makers involved
- in this redistricting process to draw lines around
- 17 communities instead of through communities. The
- 18 Illinois Voting Right Act of 2011 allows for the
- 19 creation of crossover districts, coalition districts
- 20 and influence districts. As you all heard the
- 21 definition of all those, the three districts, I'm not
- 22 going to bore you with that information that I had
- 23 already did my due diligence and going to share that
- 24 with you, but the young man stole my thunder.

1 But the purpose of those acts, and it talks 2 about the racial minorities and the language of 3 minorities is either, whether it's either singular or plural, means the same class of voters who are 4 5 members of the race, color, language, minority groups 6 receiving protection under the Federal Voting Right 7 Act. 8 The Illinois Voting Right Act of 2011 created 9 those three districts. The NAACP position is 10 the Illinois Voting Right Act of 2011 served as protection against gerrymandering black votes. 11 12 Perhaps the most constant form of gerrymandering in 13 the United States has been racial gerrymandering, 14 where districts are drawn to prevent the racial 15 minorities from getting representation. Racial 16 gerrymandering isn't just a coincidental side effect 17 on general gerrymandering, but it's an intentional attempt to suppress, if not the vote of racial 18 19 minorities, then the impact of the vote. As you 20 know, gerrymandering is the act of changing 2.1 boundaries of districts and states to manipulate the 22 voting demographics within the districts, thus 23 helping a political party maintain the power there, 24 even if the statewide demographics don't necessarily

- 1 suggest a majority.
- 2 Two forms of gerrymandering is packing and
- 3 cracking. They do different things to voting
- 4 districts to achieve similar goals. Packing is when
- 5 the boundaries are changed in such a way that the
- 6 opponent's voters are confined to a smaller number of
- 7 districts. Cracking is when they change in a way
- 8 that the opponent's base is spread out over more
- 9 different districts. The Illinois Voting Right Act
- 10 serves as a protection against those two attempts on
- 11 black voters.
- I would like to conclude by saying that the
- 13 NAACP call on legislators to formulate an equitable
- 14 redistribution plan that includes to blacks and
- 15 people of color. Blacks and people of color who live
- in a particular area should get a fair chance to
- 17 elect a person of their choice. The East St. Louis
- 18 branch NAACP is looking forward to participating in
- 19 future hearings. I would like to thank you for your
- 20 time for allowing me to participate in this public
- 21 hearing. Thank you.
- 22 CHAIRPERSON BELT: Thank you, Mr. Franklin, for
- 23 your testimony. Do we have any discussion? Seeing
- 24 no discussion -- next we have Mike Parkinson, mayor

- 1 elect of Granite City.
- Okay, next we have Rima Kamran with the
- 3 Illinois Muslim Civic Coalition. Is Rima here?
- 4 Okay. Next, then, we'll go to Stephanie Taylor with
- 5 Community Development Sustainable Solutions.
- 6 Ms. Taylor, please proceed.
- 7 MS. TAYLOR: All right. Thank you folks so much
- 8 for the opportunity to address this committee. Thank
- 9 you so much, Senator Belt, to my representatives here
- in the southwest central region and the rest of you
- 11 from across the state.
- 12 You know, I don't want to go into too much.
- 13 Stan Franklin gave a lot of pertinent information
- 14 that I would like to agree with. I represent
- 15 Community Development Sustainable Solutions, my
- 16 friends and neighbors here in East St. Louis,
- 17 Illinois, St. Clair County and the Illinois GOP
- 18 committee as I speak with you today.
- 19 Compact, contiquous and substantially equal
- 20 in population, I understand that that is the
- 21 prescript that we use as we work to redistrict. I
- 22 understand that there's been previous challenges to
- 23 redistrict -- to the redistricting plan under current
- 24 constitutional guidelines, and that is because of the

basic structure and it happens to be a sound

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2 structure. 3 The only thing that we're not experiencing here is the equity. I mean, because we know that the 4 5 basic participation in the process by hard count, 6 hard to serve rural and farm communities and 7 ultimately under-serviced populations is very low 8 when it comes to getting them to participate in the 9 census. And therefore, that leaves them effectively 10 denied in that process when it comes to considering how we really go about that redistricting process. 11 12 So I don't want us to get caught up in 13 anything political. I need us to get caught up in 14 solutions and that's equitable solutions. And I know

- 19 Because equity means we're equal, with just a few
- Decause equity means we re equal, wrem just a rem
- 20 variations or helping points that are needed to these

there's a lot of talk about what is equity and just

versus equality. But I want us to stay on that word

and an equal look at what it takes to produce equity.

equity. That means you're going to take a diverse

- 21 areas that are historically underrepresented.
- Now, when it comes to the census, I believe
- 23 we need to go ahead and move forward with the
- 24 redistricting process. Because if we have to take

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- 1 a look and say, hey, we can't change this
- 2 constitutionally, you guys are bound to look at this
- 3 equitably. And you know, southern Illinois is always
- 4 a trickle down effect. So you are taking into
- 5 consideration COVID-19, but then you have to look at
- 6 the roll out of the census in general. If we're at
- 7 the bottom of the state, it didn't come to us till
- 8 the end, which means our reaction and response time
- 9 was heavily decreased.
- 10 And if I say we have to look at that, I would
- 11 say go ahead and put that in a drawer and close it up
- 12 and go ahead and get counts so we can go ahead and
- 13 look at these people. Because we were dealing with
- 14 what does the president want to do, start it, stop
- it, go, don't, gather, no, you can't gather, no, you
- 16 can't use your normal resources when it comes to
- 17 outreach and engagement.
- 18 And I'm very concerned about keeping the
- 19 leadership that we have and gaining momentum. Those
- 20 leaders that are in our area are strong and they keep
- 21 their boots on the ground. And after dealing with
- 22 the budget impasse of Rauner, we're devoid of
- 23 services. And we don't want to take anything from
- 24 the north, but Lord knows we need it down here at the

- 1 bottom of the state.
- 2 So you know, discrimination, inequity, you
- 3 know, being slick about how you go about not getting
- 4 our numbers, I don't know what the case was. But
- 5 we didn't get the same amount of time to count as
- 6 everyone else did. Therefore, we don't want to lose
- 7 or depend on that count in order to determine who our
- 8 leaders are. We don't want to lose them. We need
- 9 more resources in our area and we love the leaders
- 10 that we have currently. So thank you very much for
- 11 that.
- 12 CHAIRPERSON BELT: Ms. Taylor, thank you for your
- 13 testimony. Do we have any discussion? Senator
- 14 Turner, go ahead.
- 15 SENATOR TURNER: These hearings give us a great
- 16 opportunity to hear directly from minority
- 17 communities and communities of interest and people
- 18 like Ms. Taylor. And I really appreciate her comment
- 19 about the census and waiting for the census numbers
- 20 based on her very apt description of what happened
- 21 and how the federal government, well, President Trump
- 22 played around with the census and gathering those
- 23 numbers. And that's something that we had no control
- 24 over and it was definitely playing politics with

- 1 minority communities and communities of color.
- 2 So while Republicans have suggested and we've
- 3 heard here tonight, moving forward without census
- 4 data could lead to a situation in which minority
- 5 communities aren't properly represented, I think
- 6 Ms. Taylor hit the nail on the head and I agree with
- 7 her that that suggestion is offensive, especially
- 8 after the blatant attempts of the Trump
- 9 administration to undercount and put communities of
- 10 color in a position where they could not complete
- 11 their count in a timely manner. So you can't support
- 12 these policies to exclude black and brown communities
- one day and then position yourself as a defender of
- 14 those same communities the next.
- So I really appreciate what you had to say,
- 16 Ms. Taylor, and I think that it really does shine a
- 17 light on the dilemma that we find ourselves in and
- 18 the reason why we're in that dilemma. So thank you
- 19 very much.
- 20 CHAIRPERSON BELT: Thank you, Senator Turner.
- 21 Hearing no other testimony, debate, discussion, we'll
- 22 go to Mark Snyder. Mark, would you please proceed?
- 23 Okay. Next, then, we will go to Willie Preston
- 24 representing Green Zones. Mr. Preston.

1 Okay, next we'll go with Sharon Gill, 2 representing herself. Please proceed. 3 MS. GILL: Karen said we only had to put down if 4 we're representing somebody. I wasn't, but it 5 wouldn't let me complete the form without --6 CHAIRPERSON BELT: Ms. Gill, would you put 7 your --8 MS. GILL: Put the ear buds in? 9 CHAIRPERSON BELT: Yes, ma'am. 10 MS. GILL: I've never used ear buds. Okay. 11 CHAIRPERSON BELT: You are good to go. 12 MS. GILL: All right. Admittedly, waiting until 13 the census results are out could cause problems as it may be near November. We all know 2020 was not a 14 15 normal year. And as a former census worker, I can 16 attest that the efforts stop before the work seems 17 complete. They've been, the census has been working to fix the data as best as possible. Per my boss, 18 19 East St. Louis and Collinsville were particularly 20 incomplete at the time that our former president 21 stopped the counting process. 22 There is a process to allow redistricting 23 to occur after 30 June which has been discussed by 24 several folks here within the constitution, Illinois

- 1 constitution. Most important, the process needs to
- 2 be nonpartisan and independent. That the current
- 3 districts are compact is laughable. I heard the
- 4 briefing. A reasonable person would not view our
- 5 current serpentine districts to be compact.
- 6 Gerrymandering must stop.
- 7 The proposal set forth by Change Illinois
- 8 makes sense and is similar to that Senator Plummer
- 9 described from Senate bill 1325, create a nonpartisan
- 10 independent committee to draw the district's
- 11 boundaries. That's the basics.
- 12 CHAIRPERSON BELT: Okay, you're done?
- 13 MS. GILL: Questions?
- 14 CHAIRPERSON BELT: Any discussion? Seeing none,
- 15 thank you, ma'am. Next we'll bring Jeff, is it
- 16 Ebelot, Ebelsizer? Jeff? Okay. Finally, our next
- 17 witness is Joel Funk and we will bring Joel up.
- 18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: He's in, I quess.
- 19 CHAIRPERSON BELT: Proceed, Mr. Funk.
- 20 MR. FUNK: I'd just like to thank the committee
- 21 for bringing this opportunity to the community. This
- 22 is incredibly important. A special thanks, I would
- 23 be remiss if I didn't give a special thanks to my
- 24 senator, Senator Belt, my representative,

- 1 Representative Greenwood for hosting this event.
- I've had many labels in my life, you know,
- 3 farm boy, student, soldier, cadet, Army aviator,
- 4 special operations aviator and more recently,
- 5 disabled veteran and farmer. But I come to you
- 6 tonight in a slightly different capacity, and that is
- 7 someone who spent most of their life, more of their
- 8 life dealing with conflict and security and trying to
- 9 understand why I was in places like Iraq and Syria
- 10 and Afghanistan, why we were there, what causes a
- 11 community to crumble, how to rebuild, how to bring
- 12 people back together.
- And for me, you know, and I don't think I can
- 14 say it more plainly than say that our country is in
- 15 crisis, our country is in conflict. We are divided.
- 16 And I don't have to go into details of why and how.
- 17 We see it on the news, we see it in conversation, we
- 18 see the disinformation out there. Everything is
- 19 binary, zeros, ones, black, white, blue, red, mask,
- 20 no mask, vax, anti-vax. We are so divided and so
- 21 broken apart that we run the risk of continuing to go
- 22 down that path.
- Now, by no means am I going to speak in
- 24 hyperbole and think that we're going to turn into

- 1 Afghanistan tomorrow. And I'm not going to say that
- 2 how we draw, how you all draw these lines is going to
- 3 automatically change things and bring us all back
- 4 together, but it's a part of that process.
- 5 And so I ask that the committee, as you go
- 6 forward, build districts that bring us back together,
- 7 build districts that are representative of the people
- 8 of Illinois and that we can elect representatives
- 9 that will bring us back together. That is my hope,
- 10 that is my concern. That is my plea to the committee
- 11 as you go forward. Bring our state, bring our
- 12 country back together. Thank you for doing this
- 13 committee. Thank you for everything you do for our
- 14 great state. And I yield.
- 15 CHAIRPERSON BELT: Thank you for your testimony,
- 16 Mr. Funk. Would there be any discussion for
- 17 Mr. Funk? Hearing none, thank you, sir.
- 18 MR. FUNK: Thank you.
- 19 CHAIRPERSON BELT: Next we have, help me out
- 20 here, Samer Aldroubi representing himself.
- 21 MR. ALDROUBI: I'm Samer Aldroubi. I'm calling
- 22 in from Peoria, but obviously I met someone who loves
- 23 my community. I certainly know we have many things
- 24 in common with the East St. Louis area and what some

- of the important things might be here. So thank you
- 2 to all the members of both legislative bodies that
- 3 are here and taking their time to listen. It's very
- 4 much appreciated.
- 5 That said, as an Illinoisan, as a state we
- 6 have a reputation and it generally isn't a good one.
- 7 With regularity, Illinois is sort of a punch line of,
- 8 oh, what's the state with the corruption? What's the
- 9 state that is broke? Illinois. And it isn't an
- 10 unfair characterization, unfortunately, so many
- 11 times. And we need to work at dealing with the
- 12 underlying issues that drive that and the appearance
- 13 that makes people think that of our state that I'm
- 14 truly happy to be a citizen of. We need fair,
- 15 consistent, transparent redistricting as a key part
- 16 of this.
- 17 People in groups in power tend to work to
- 18 stay in power. It isn't always this horrible,
- 19 nefarious thing, but you know, if an elected official
- 20 genuinely believes they are the best person for the
- 21 job, they work to stay in power to strive to continue
- 22 that work. But over time, whether it's, you know, an
- 23 elected official, the administrative function for
- 24 that group, a political party, it's corrosive. And

- 1 the vital check we have on corruption is our
- 2 electoral process.
- But when you have biased maps, which we do,
- 4 drawn to maintain or consolidate power, we short
- 5 circuit that check on our leaders. If we, the
- 6 people, believe we have biased maps, that, too, is
- 7 corrosive because it discourages folks to choose not
- 8 to vote and they stay less engaged within the
- 9 government and their community. We need a process
- 10 that is good, fair and trusted, which includes a
- 11 transparent and clear process, a well defined process
- 12 and calendar.
- 13 For example, you know, after these hearings,
- 14 which are great, you know, what are the next steps?
- 15 If the legislature will be setting these boundaries,
- 16 you know, when will draft maps be out? What will the
- 17 sort of review period be in the process for getting
- 18 additional input be before things are finalized? We
- 19 need very strong outreach.
- 20 I think it's great that these meetings are
- 21 occurring, but I stay fairly well plugged into things
- 22 and I only learned of these hearings last week. You
- 23 know, that's not one person's fault or anything like
- 24 that, but you know, I quarantee you I could go into

- 1 my neighborhood and people would have been like what
- 2 are you talking about?
- And so we need to make sure that outreach
- 4 work is strong and that there aren't issues of very
- 5 short notice sessions, especially once proposed maps
- 6 are released. You know, releasing a draft and then
- 7 voting on it in a very short period of time just
- 8 makes people feel like people are ticking
- 9 administrative boxes. So we need multiple weeks
- 10 between when a proposal is made and a vote so the
- 11 people trust the process.
- 12 Ultimately, the process needs to be, one,
- 13 a culture of enfranchisement. Groups that have a
- 14 common interest should not be watered down by
- 15 spreading them between multiple districts. And most
- 16 obviously, this is racial and ethnic minorities, but
- it is so many groups potentially as we look at a
- 18 process that would serve us well into the future.
- 19 We need people to feel empowered and engaged to
- 20 strengthen the protections that, you know, things
- 21 like the Illinois and federal Voting Rights Act
- 22 employ or are supposed to guarantee.
- 23 And ultimately in all this, you know, this
- 24 year is, COVID-19 threw a wrench into it. And I

1 don't know exactly what this will look like, what it 2 needs to look like other than stating those ideals I 3 just shared. But ultimately, I would ask this group of representatives to consider how can you lead as we 4 5 go out of this process as well towards perhaps a 6 constitutional amendment or whatever is necessary to 7 make sure that there is a truly nonpartisan process for the next decade so that this isn't coming down to 8 9 things of people who are in power choosing, you know, 10 how to play the cards they're dealt but instead can be a process that people trust. 11 12 And just ultimately, it takes that burden also off of the legislature so that, you know, each 13 14 ten years when this comes around they get, you know, 15 this is what this committee says we're going to do 16 and it's not something that they even have to deal 17 with in any major way. You guys can spend your time or your successors ten years from now can spend their 18 time doing other work for the citizens of the state. 19 2.0 Like I said, I live in Peoria. I love my 2.1 community. And we have our challenges, as so many communities in the state do. And the truth is, many 22 23 of those have at least some part that's been driven 24 by state leadership over the years and decades. And

- 1 I've seen some improvement the last few years, we can
- 2 talk about all that stuff. But at the end of the
- 3 day, I guess what I'd just ask is for everyone to
- 4 remember, regardless of the partisan interests and
- 5 things that may be there, the communities of the
- 6 state need this to be a good process that makes us
- 7 come out stronger.
- And so I just thank you all for your time and
- 9 ask your help in ensuring we have the most
- 10 transparent and representative redistricting process
- 11 we can, both in this cycle and in the future. Thank
- 12 you.
- 13 SENATOR CROWE: Thank you, sir, for your
- 14 testimony. Chair Belt had to step away for a moment.
- 15 While we're waiting for him to return, I want to say
- 16 you said it very well, the communities need this to
- 17 be a transparent and safe process. So thank you for
- 18 that. All right, is there any discussion for this
- 19 witness?
- 20 SENATOR PLUMMER: Senator Crowe, I have a
- 21 question.
- 22 SENATOR CROWE: Senator Plummer.
- 23 SENATOR PLUMMER: Thank you, Senator Crowe.
- 24 Thank you, Samer, for your testimony. I appreciate

1 it. Peoria is a great community, so thank you for 2 Zooming in today. 3 Throughout the course of these hearings, 4 several different advocacy groups from across the 5 state, from across the political spectrum have 6 requested that legislators commit to a two week 7 period of time at minimum after maps are introduced 8 in Springfield and before a vote is taken so that the 9 public can comment on those proposed maps. We have a 10 terrible habit in Springfield of introducing very, very important things and voting on it less than 11 12 24 hours later, often in the middle of the night. 13 And for something this consequential to the 14 state and for something this consequential to so many 15 different groups is a proposal like that, a waiting 16 period between the introduction of a map and the vote 17 on the map so the public can have input, is something like that something you would be supportive of like a 18 lot of the other witnesses? And is it something you 19 20 would like to see legislators on the record on 2.1 whether or not they support that? Because when it 22 comes to transparency and when it comes to some of 23 these issues that are discussed, you're either 24 serious about it or it's just rhetoric. And I want

- 1 to see who's serious and who's just, you know, being
- 2 politically correct when it comes to true
- 3 transparency on the maps.
- 4 MR. ALDROUBI: Yes, I would say absolutely, I'm
- 5 in favor of there being a window of, I think two
- 6 weeks is a good timeline. The exact time isn't that
- 7 important. The other piece, though, I would put with
- 8 that is that ultimately, I think we need to have a
- 9 plan to get out of the partisan process. So I'd much
- 10 prefer seeing a proposal that delegates this to an
- 11 administrative group without partisan interest on top
- 12 of that.
- 13 SENATOR PLUMMER: Thank you. Thank you for the
- 14 follow up, Samer. To your point, I just want to
- 15 point out I won't speak for my colleagues in other
- 16 chambers or on the other side of the aisle, but
- 17 Senate Republicans stand unanimously for a waiting
- 18 period between the introduction of a map and the vote
- 19 on the map so that the public can truly have input.
- 20 And to your point about removing politicians
- 21 from the process, as I outlined in my opening
- 22 statement, we have introduced legislation that would
- 23 do exactly that. It would take the politicians out
- 24 of the process and it would insert an independent

- 1 commission into the process so that the voters truly
- 2 have a voice.
- 3 Mr. Funk earlier gave some interesting
- 4 testimony. And by the way, I think everyone would
- 5 like to thank him for his service to the country.
- 6 But he gave very interesting testimony about some of
- 7 the places he's been. And you know, what's
- 8 interesting about some of those place, I was an intel
- 9 officer in the Navy and these are all places where
- 10 power is consolidated amongst very few. And those
- 11 people that have power make the rules and those
- 12 people that have power control the processes. And we
- don't want to see that in Illinois, we don't want to
- 14 see that anywhere. We want the people involved in
- 15 the process. And Samer, if you look at what we've
- introduced in the Senate, 1325, that's exactly what
- 17 it does. Thank you.
- 18 SENATOR BELT: Any further discussion for Samer?
- 19 Hearing none, I want to circle back and make sure
- 20 that Brooke Smith is not here. Okay. Mark --
- 21 Ashleigh Stewart, is Ashleigh here? Okay, no
- 22 Ashleigh Stewart. And finally, panel four is Syamala
- 23 Krishnamsetty with Change Illinois. Is she here? So
- 24 they're not here. Is there any other testimony at

1 this time? Oh, I'm sorry. Mrs. Taylor, go ahead. 2 Yes, everything was wonderful. MS. TAYLOR: 3 Again, representing Illinois Juneteenth, national 4 Juneteenth, you know, the state of Illinois is really 5 looking good as leaders. So I would just say to the 6 point of Senator Jason, and I apologize, I can't see 7 your last name, sir, respectfully, but to your point, 8 you know, when you're saying what we would like to 9 see a committee, I would like to say, you know, if 10 we're starting, or if we're having a conversation here, since you know there's maps on the table, can 11 12 we not just go ahead and form that committee? 13 And we need to make sure that it's 14 represented as well here in the southwest central 15 region because again, we do get choked out per capita 16 when it comes to Chicago and the other areas, 17 although we love them, but we do need a committee to take a look at those maps. And we also, when I went 18 19 into the link, that link wasn't open. We need to 20 reopen it. Because even when it came to the hearing, 21 we always say that the newspapers are guilty of it, 22 but even when it came to getting the witness slips, 23 when it came to knowing about the hearing, our 24 newspaper didn't get that information out until, what

- 1 was it, maybe today, yesterday. So we've got to do
- 2 better when we're talking about systems in place.
- 3 And again as someone pushing Juneteenth and as a
- 4 pillar of excellence for the state of Illinois, when
- 5 it comes to structures that are in place and
- 6 outdated, let's get the committee together so that we
- 7 can get the true voice and you can have those numbers
- 8 to count, please. Thank you.
- 9 CHAIRPERSON BELT: Thank you, Mrs. Taylor.
- 10 SENATOR PLUMMER: Chairman Belt, may I follow up
- 11 on that?
- 12 CHAIRPERSON BELT: Oh, by all means. Go ahead,
- 13 sir.
- 14 SENATOR PLUMMER: Thank you, Senator Belt, and
- 15 thank you to witness Stephanie Taylor for the follow
- 16 up there. Just first off, I agree with everything
- 17 that you said, witness Taylor. And I just want to
- 18 point out that what we've described that would solve
- 19 the concerns of, I think you and a lot of the other
- 20 witnesses we've heard from today but also the
- 21 witnesses we've heard from across the state
- 22 throughout all these hearings, those things can be
- 23 solved. All we have to do is have the majority party
- 24 call Senate bill 1325 to a vote in Springfield. They

- 1 could do it next week. It received massive
- 2 bipartisan support in years previous. And so we can
- 3 solve this. All we have to do is take a vote on
- 4 1325.
- I want to also dive a little deeper into the
- 6 concerns that -- very, very valid concerns that I
- 7 think that you represented in your previous comments,
- 8 concerns about the data and groups that are
- 9 overrepresented and groups that are underrepresented.
- 10 I think we need to drill down on the stats there and
- 11 the facts there just so everyone is operating off of
- 12 the correct information.
- So this census, as messed up as it was from
- 14 the federal level because of COVID, because of a
- 15 variety of other factors, I think a lot of people saw
- 16 the concerns. So the state of Illinois invested over
- 17 \$50 million, \$50 million, unprecedented, to make sure
- 18 that we maximized turnout, especially turnout in
- 19 these groups that are traditionally under
- 20 represented. We had the highest turnout ever from a
- 21 census in the state of Illinois, this past census
- 22 because of that massive investment. In fact, after
- 23 the turnout numbers came out, we had politicians from
- 24 across the state and across the political spectrum

- 1 issuing press releases and talking about how
- 2 phenomenal the turnout was, how Illinois was leading
- 3 the nation.
- 4 So a question that I would have, I believe
- 5 the ultimate turnout in the state was around 71 or
- 6 72 percent. The Metro East area, which this
- 7 committee is supposed to be representing, actually
- 8 had an even higher turnout. So if we use that census
- 9 data, we're actually going to make sure that we're
- 10 using the best, most accurate data to cover those
- 11 underrepresented groups.
- 12 The ACS data that's being proposed is a
- 13 snapshot in time. It's not as near as accurate. It
- doesn't have the safety valves in place to make sure
- 15 those traditionally underrepresented groups are
- 16 represented by following up multiple times at their
- 17 house and by making sure the counts are accurate.
- 18 So I couldn't be more in agreement with you about the
- 19 concerns about groups that are underrepresented,
- 20 whether that's because of where they live or whatever
- 21 other factor.
- What's most important, and I think everyone
- 23 should be able to agree on this, is that we use the
- 24 best data available. And the best data available,

- 1 acknowledged by everybody, is the census data.
- 2 And if we rush this and we use the ACS data, we're
- 3 only going to perpetuate the groups that are
- 4 underrepresented continuing to be underrepresented
- 5 when it comes to their government in Springfield,
- 6 Illinois. Thank you.
- 7 CHAIRPERSON BELT: To Senator Plummer's point,
- 8 again those numbers, that 71 percent, I don't know if
- 9 I'm misquoting you or not, but those numbers for the
- 10 Metro East would be an average of the number -- of
- 11 all the communities brought in together. And so I
- 12 would say again that the underserved communities of
- 13 East St. Louis, of Venice, of Centreville, of
- 14 Brooklyn, of which those three, Centreville, East
- 15 St. Louis and Brooklyn are three of the top ten poor
- 16 cities in Illinois, Centreville having the dubious
- 17 distinction of being the poorest city two years ago
- in all of Ill -- in the country, not just Illinois.
- 19 I would say an underserved community with
- 20 historically, that has historically been
- 21 undercounted.
- 22 You add to the equation a pandemic that
- 23 disproportionately impacts those brown and black
- 24 people in those communities. I just can't see how

- 1 those numbers are the greatest that we've ever had.
- 2 Because I was on the ground in East St. Louis. I've
- 3 been on the ground in Venice, I've been on the ground
- 4 in Brooklyn and I know how hard it was, beyond what
- 5 is the normal case, this year in particular because
- 6 people were afraid of the pandemic to come out and
- 7 take part in the census.
- And so I understand the point that you're
- 9 trying to make, but I would take exception with the
- 10 rule that in underserved communities that are
- 11 traditionally always undercounted because they don't
- 12 open -- you send people to their doors that don't
- 13 look like them and they open the door -- they're not
- 14 going to open the door. You send people to the door
- and in those citizens' mind, they believe that
- 16 they're going to get arrested or someone is going to
- 17 get evicted out of their apartment if they give you
- 18 the true number of people who are residing in their
- 19 home. It may be two people on the lease but five or
- 20 six living there. You're not going to get that
- 21 number. And so they're traditionally historically
- 22 undercounted. But that didn't change. That part
- 23 didn't change.
- Now, add to that a once in a lifetime

- 1 pandemic that killed in historical numbers black
- 2 people, brown people, more, disproportionately more
- 3 than any other group. Again, that 71 percent that
- 4 you quoted, I don't argue with that. But those
- 5 numbers are brought up by the surrounding
- 6 communities. That would be my argument to you on
- 7 that.
- 8 SENATOR PLUMMER: Senator Belt, may I follow up
- 9 on that?
- 10 CHAIRPERSON BELT: Yes, sir.
- 11 SENATOR PLUMMER: Thank you. I understand that
- 12 that's your argument. But the fact of the matter is
- 13 groups from across Illinois, from across the
- 14 political spectrum have testified countless times at
- 15 these hearings and they all disagree with you. The
- 16 fact of the matter is we can have feelings. I'm
- 17 operating off of facts.
- 18 And I'm not going to say we think these
- 19 counties had this sort of turnout or we think these
- 20 counties had that sort of turnout. You can look at
- 21 the data. And if look at the Metro East,
- 22 specifically Madison and St. Clair County, they came
- 23 in above state average. We can say, well, this
- 24 community or that community or this county or that

- 1 county, right, but the fact of the matter is,
- 2 regardless of whether we're plus five basis points or
- 3 south five basis points or whatever, the fact of the
- 4 matter is we know and experts who do this for a
- 5 living have all testified that the ACS data will be
- 6 inferior to the census data.
- 7 So we can knock around the census data, we
- 8 can sit here and say, well, the state of Illinois had
- 9 the highest census turnout of any high population
- 10 state but then knock it. We can say that the state
- of Illinois had the seventh highest turnout of all
- 12 the states in the country and then knock it. We can
- 13 sit here and say the Metro East had the highest
- 14 turnout than the state as a whole and then knock it.
- 15 We can ignore the \$50 million we've invested, we can
- 16 ignore the press releases that we issued. But when
- 17 we get, when you get to the end of the trail here,
- 18 the fact of the matter is Illinois still had a great
- 19 census performance, it's the best census performance
- 20 we've ever had. And the experts acknowledge,
- 21 regardless of how the census performance was, that
- 22 data is better than the ACS data specifically for
- 23 rural and minority communities. That's not Senator
- 24 Plummer saying that. That's experts.

1 And so why, if we care about transparency and 2 if we care about making sure people are best 3 represented, why would we acknowledge that we're 4 going to use the less accurate and the more prone to 5 mistakes number? We need to use the best data on 6 hand and experts acknowledge that's the census data. 7 I can go into a million reasons why, but we've heard it a hundred times in these committees. Census data 8 9 is superior to ACS data specifically for rural and 10 minority communities. That's not Republican or 11 Democrat, that's not north or south. That's a fact. 12 And so when we're talking about making sure these 13 groups have a voice in Springfield, why would we not want to use the best data? 14 15 Senator Plummer, that sounded CHAIRPERSON BELT: 16 But let me tell you this again. You paint 17 with a broad stroke and a big brush. You keep saying what the experts say and you keep saying all these 18 19 wonderful things, but they're general in nature. 2.0 don't argue with you that Millstadt in my district 2.1 did phenomenal. I won't argue with you that 22 Mascoutah in my district did phenomenal. 23 tell me that these underserved communities that are 24 always underserved, always not counted and then on

1 top of that, again a pandemic came to town and they 2 did great, I just don't see how you can say that. 3 Again, you say you go to all these hearings and they say it. They? This is the first one in 4 5 southwestern Illinois that I've attended. And so 6 you've got a mayor over there that was on the ground 7 with us, trying to drum up support. And every single 8 time we tried to do something, we were lucky if we 9 got 14, 15 people to come out because they were 10 afraid for a host of reasons. Then I go to Fairmount 11 City, a largely Hispanic Latinx community, and they 12 are afraid that the Census Bureau is going to act as 13 a law enforcement agency and send them back, so they 14 don't come out. And so they don't take part in it. 15 And you again tell me time and time again and 16 you say it's emotions. It's not emotion. I'll give 17 you that Fairview Heights had a banner year, which is in my district. I will give you that Freeburg 18 19 knocked it out of the park, which is in my district. 20 But I am speaking to you specifically about 2.1 underserved communities. And not just for this census year. Historically. The fact that some of 22 23 these communities are in the condition that they're 24 in is because they don't take -- they don't

- 1 participate in the census. And so those dollars that
- 2 flow miss these communities. That didn't change.
- 3 And so when you look at the -- and this is
- 4 part of the problem. So when you look at the bigger
- 5 picture, you see that 71 percent for the Metro East
- 6 and you say doggone it, we knocked it out of the
- 7 park, we did our job. And then you come down here
- 8 and those same communities are suffering, probably
- 9 more so than ever because there, again there was a
- 10 pandemic, a killer outside their windows that jumped
- on and hopped on preexisting conditions and choked
- 12 the life out of them, killed them, put them in the
- 13 hospital, lost loved ones. I can go on and on like
- 14 you can.
- And I just find it hard to believe that that
- 16 71 percent in the Metro East is indicative of East
- 17 St. Louis, Brooklyn, Venice and Centreville, Cahokia,
- 18 all the areas I walked trying to drum up support and
- 19 get people out. You are right when you say
- 20 Edwardsville, which is not in my district, let me put
- 21 that out there, but I guarantee you they probably hit
- 22 it out of the park, right, or wherever. But these
- 23 communities that I speak of, Senator Plummer, I was
- 24 on the ground. It's not emotional. It's empirical

- 1 evidence because I was there.
- 2 And so with that being said, though, I
- 3 respect your opinion, I hope you respect mine and
- 4 we'll move on. Next we have Senator Crowe to speak.
- 5 SENATOR CROWE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I do want
- 6 to address one other issue that continually arises at
- 7 these hearings. And it is this false choice that
- 8 continually gets put up before these groups where
- 9 people think that there's this Republican bill out
- 10 there that's somehow going to create an independent
- 11 group to create a map. This is truly a false choice.
- 12 Republicans know that this bill is nothing but a
- 13 smoke screen. A bill cannot trump the constitution.
- 14 There's no ifs, ands or butts about that. A bill
- 15 cannot trump the constitution. Our constitution is
- 16 very clear. We have a June 30th deadline to draw a
- 17 map. If we fail to meet that deadline, we, Democrats
- 18 and Republicans have failed. Thank you, Mr. Chair.
- 19 CHAIRPERSON BELT: Thank you, Senator Crowe. Any
- 20 other debate?
- 21 REPRESENTATIVE STUART: If it's okay, Senator.
- 22 CHAIRPERSON BELT: Sure, Representative Stuart.
- 23 REPRESENTATIVE STUART: Thank you. I would like
- 24 to point out that there are times that, you know,

- 1 members on the other side of the aisle from myself
- 2 frequently rely on the ACS data when it seems
- 3 convenient. So I would like a little consistency.
- 4 It's either good data or it's not. So you can't
- 5 point to it when you choose and then tell us it's
- 6 inferior when you don't want us to use it. Minds,
- 7 you know, need to be made up.
- 8 In terms of the investment in the census,
- 9 census data is used for lots of other purposes
- 10 besides the redistricting purpose. It's how we
- 11 allocate resources, federal assistance and lots of
- 12 other important things. I would say that that is
- 13 highly worth our investment as a state. So the idea
- 14 that we've wasted money on getting census data is
- 15 just a ridiculous proposition, in my mind, because
- 16 it's valuable for lots of other things. I just
- 17 wanted to make sure that we made that clear.
- 18 CHAIRPERSON BELT: Thank you, Representative
- 19 Stuart. We continue our discussions on
- 20 redistricting. I ask those that testified today and
- 21 those listening to please engage with the committee
- 22 as we work to make sure community voices are heard.
- 23 If you have any further documents, information or
- 24 questions, please feel free to send them to

1 RedistrictingCommittee@SenateDem.ILGA.gov. If you 2 are interested in drawing legislative maps, please go to our web site, https, colon, back slash, back slash, ILSenateRredistricting.com, back slash. Or 4 5 you can draw Senate and House maps as well as 6 communities of interest, then submit them to the That being said, I will now turn it over 7 8 to Representative Mah to adjourn the House 9 redistricting committee. 10 REPRESENTATIVE MAH: I want to thank everyone for participating tonight. Your input is really 11 12 important. And seeing no further business before the House redistricting committee, the committee is 13 adjourned to the call of -- excuse me, is recessed to 14 15 the call of the Chair. 16 CHAIRPERSON BELT: Thank you. There is no 17 further business to come before the committee. meeting of the Senate redistricting committee of 18 19 southwestern Illinois stands adjourned. Thank you all. 2.0 2.1 22 23 24

Page 60

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     Reporter, do hereby certify that the meeting
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17
18
19
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22
23
24
```

	Ī	Ī	l	Ī
	38:23 40:9	10:14,18 41:6	Army 36:3	basis 9:21 20:21
able 4:10 12:21	44:11	American 15:14	arrange 10:3	53:2,3
23:5 24:6,7	Admittedly	amount 32:5	arrested 51:16	behalf 23:24
49:23	34:12	ample 10:3	Ashleigh 45:21	believe 12:6
absolutely 9:21	advantage	ands 57:14	45:21,22	26:12 30:22
44:4	14:23	Annexations	Asian 22:17	39:6 49:4
accepting 21:22	advocacy 43:4	19:1	asked 9:23	51:15 56:15
accurate 9:11	affect 24:6	announce 4:16	assembled	believes 38:20
49:10,13,17	afforded 17:7	4:18	25:18	Belleville 3:17
54:4	Afghanistan	annual 22:5	assembly 6:9	Belt 2:3 3:1,12
achieve 28:4	36:10 37:1	anti-vax 36:20	7:15	3:13,22 4:5
Ackerman 3:16	aforemention	apart 36:21	assistance	5:8 11:14 12:8
acknowledge	60:6	apartment 51:17	58:11	12:17 13:6,12
9:10 53:20	afraid 51:6	apologize 46:6	attempt 11:17	13:17 14:6
54:3,6	55:10,12	appearance	26:3 27:18	16:14 23:15,16
acknowledged	African-Ameri	38:12	attempts 28:10	25:3,7,16
50:1	22:16,22 23:1	appointed 18:5	33:8	28:22 29:9
ACS 9:8,10	agency 55:13	appointees	attended 55:5	32:12 33:20
15:19 16:10	ago 6:14 16:6	7:20	attention 23:3	34:6,9,11
49:12 50:2	50:17	appreciate	attest 34:16	35:12,14,19,24
53:5,22 54:9	agree 18:9,15	4:20 8:8 12:7	August 7:6	37:15,19 42:14
58:2	29:14 33:6	32:18 33:15	15:13	45:18 47:9,10
act 10:13,20	47:16 49:23	42:24	automatically	47:12,14 50:7
12:11,12 20:17	agreement	appreciated	37:3	52:8,10 54:15
20:24 26:3,12	49:18	38:4	available 12:24	57:19,22
26:18 27:7,8	ahead 22:7	approval 18:8	13:9 49:24,24	58:18 59:16
27:10,20 28:9	23:21 30:23	approve 4:2	average 50:10	best 34:18
40:21 55:12	31:11,12,12	approximately	52:23	38:20 49:10
acts 27:1	32:14 46:1,12	17:12	aviator 36:3,4	49:24,24
actual 9:8	47:12	April 1:6	В	53:19 54:2,5
add 50:22	aisle 11:2 44:16	apt 32:20		54:14
51:24	58:1	area 4:23 12:18	B 60:4	better 47:2
addition 12:4	Alaris 2:23	13:23 14:10,12	back 5:6 11:15	53:22
21:16	Aldroubi 37:20	20:9 24:3,7,15	13:12 16:13	beyond 51:4
additional 23:8	37:21,21 44:4	24:24 28:16	36:12 37:3,6,9 37:12 45:19	biased 39:3,6
39:18	alike 20:11	31:20 32:9		big 54:17
address 21:20	allocate 58:11	37:24 49:6	55:13 59:3,3,4 background	bigger 56:4
25:24 29:8	allow 4:5,9 7:24	areas 19:2	3:19 16:24	bill 10:14 35:9
57:6	9:7 34:22	22:10 25:24	ballot 10:6	47:24 57:9,12
adjacent 19:5	allowed 4:8	30:21 46:16	banner 55:17	57:13,14
adjourn 59:8	allowing 23:23	56:18	base 28:8	binary 36:19
adjourned	28:20	argue 52:4	based 17:18	bipartisan 10:11
59:14,19	allows 13:2 21:10 26:18	54:20,21	32:20	11:5 48:2 bit 5:6
administration		argued 7:13	basic 30:1,5	black 24:9 26:4
33:9	ambience 24:22	argument 52:6 52:12	basics 35:11	27:11 28:11
administrative	amendment	arises 57:6	basing 9:16	33:12 36:19
		anses 37.0		33.12 30.13

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	I	I		
50:23 52:1	budget 31:22	48:21 49:8	51:22,23 56:2	Clerk 3:3,4,6,8
blacks 28:14,15	buds 34:8,10	50:1 51:7 53:6	changed 9:14	3:10,12
blatant 33:8	build 37:6,7	53:7,9,19,19	28:5	close 31:11
block 15:13	burden 41:12	53:21 54:6,8	changes 6:15	Co-Chairpers
blue 3:15 4:9	Bureau 7:3,4	55:12,22 56:1	17:16	2:6
36:19	22:2 55:12	58:8,9,14	changing 6:12	co-sponsored
bodies 38:2	Bureau's 22:5	center 6:7 8:12	27:20	10:18
boots 31:21	business 59:12	19:14	characteristics	co-sponsors
bore 26:22	59:17	central 19:13	12:15	10:16
boss 34:18	Butler 2:6 5:5	29:10 46:14	characterizati	coalition 21:3,7
bottom 31:7	13:14 14:3,4	Centreville	38:10	26:19 29:3
32:1	butts 57:14	50:13,14,16	check 39:1,5	coincidental
bound 31:2		56:17	Chicago 4:23	27:16
boundaries	<u> </u>	certain 9:15	46:16	colleagues 6:5
15:9 19:12,23	C 2:1	certainly 37:23	children 8:7	8:21 14:1 44:15
20:2 26:6	cadet 36:3	Certified 60:4	choice 21:6,9	Collinsville
27:21 28:5	Cahokia 56:17	certify 60:5	28:17 57:7,11	34:19
35:11 39:15	calendar 39:12	Chair 3:12,22	choices 10:6	colon 59:3
boundary 6:24	Calhoun 5:13	13:17 23:5	choked 46:15	color 9:14 27:5
box 10:6	call 4:12,17	25:15 42:14	56:11	28:15,15 33:1
boxes 40:9	28:13 47:24	57:5,18 59:15	choose 18:12	33:10
boy 36:3	59:14,15	Chairman 8:11	39:7 58:5	come 4:15 15:13
branch 25:13	called 3:3 19:19	11:13 25:16	choosing 41:9	21:13 23:18
25:23 28:18	19:20	47:10	Christopher 2:3	24:23 31:7
branches 25:21	calling 37:21	Chairperson	25:16	36:5 42:7 51:6
brief 11:17 13:13	calls 12:1	2:3 3:1,13 4:5	circle 45:19	55:9,14 56:7
16:22	candidate 21:6	5:8 11:14 16:14	circuit 39:5	59:17
briefing 35:4	21:9	23:16 25:3,7	cities 50:16	comes 8:4 30:8
briefly 16:23	capacity 36:6	28:22 32:12	citizen 38:14	30:10,22 31:16
bring 11:11 21:8	capita 46:15	33:20 34:6,9	citizens 14:15	41:14 43:22
35:15,17 36:11	cards 41:10	34:11 35:12,14	41:19	43:22 44:2
37:3,6,9,11,11	care 3:19 11:3	35:19 37:15,19	citizens' 51:15	46:16 47:5
bringing 35:21	14:21 54:1,2	47:9,12 50:7	city 23:24 24:18	50:5
broad 54:17	case 32:4 51:5	52:10 54:15	29:1 50:17	comfort 12:22
broke 38:9	caught 30:12,13	57:19,22	55:11 60:2	coming 23:4
broken 36:21	cause 34:13	58:18 59:16	Civic 29:3	41:8
Brooke 45:20	caused 7:4,6	challenges	claim 8:21	comment 32:18
Brooklyn 50:14	causes 36:10	29:22 41:21	claimed 7:19	43:9
50:15 51:4	census 7:3,4,9	chamber 15:4	9:19	comments 6:19
56:17	7:12 9:8,11	chambers 44:16	Clair 5:14 22:20	13:8 48:7
brought 11:19	15:11,11,12	Champaign	24:15 29:17	commission
50:11 52:5	22:2,4,5,8	22:13	52:22	7:16,18,19
brown 24:10	24:6,11,12,16	chance 26:8	Clair's 22:21	10:18,23 14:18
33:12 50:23	30:9,22 31:6	28:16	class 27:4	16:3 18:3,4,7,9
52:2	32:19,19,22	change 11:11	clear 7:10 8:23	18:14,15 45:1
brush 54:17	33:3 34:13,15	28:7 31:1 35:7	9:1 39:11 57:16	commit 43:6
Bryant 5:16	34:17 48:13,21	37:3 45:23	58:17	committed
	ı	<u> </u>	1	1

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10:10	compact 19:9	consist 18:4	core 19:13	21:3
committee 1:2	20:2 29:19	consistency	correct 44:2	creation 26:19
2:2 3:24 4:1,13	35:3,5	58:3	48:12	crisis 12:5 36:15
4:15 5:1,4,9,11	compactness	consistent	corrections 4:4	criteria 19:11
5:24 6:1 11:11	19:8,11,11,15,17	38:15	corrections 1.1	crossover 21:3
11:23 21:22	competition	consistently	39:7	21:4 26:19
23:12,13	10:7	11:7	corruption 38:8	Crowe 2:3 3:10
24:24 25:1,15	complete 7:11	consists 25:21	39:1	3:11,21,22 4:5
29:8,18 35:10	33:10 34:5,17	consolidate	count 8:5 30:5	5:16 12:18
35:20 37:5,10	compliance	39:4	32:5,7 33:11	42:13,20,22
37:13 41:15	21:13	consolidated	47:8	42:23 57:4,5
46:9,12,17	concentrated	45:10	counted 54:24	57:19
47:6 49:7	20:9	constant 27:12	counties 5:13,14	crumble 36:11
58:21 59:7,9	concentration	constantly 6:12	19:3 22:13	CSR 2:22,22
59:13,13,17,18	21:1	constituents	52:19,20	culturally 20:10
committee's	concern 7:6	9:6	counting 9:18	culture 40:13
5:12	37:10	constitute 18:7	34:21	current 29:23
committees	concerned 9:2	constitution 6:8	countless 52:14	35:2,5
13:4 54:8	31:18			· ·
		7:8,9 12:10,11	country 9:10	currently 5:15 9:23 32:10
common 37:24	concerns 6:19	15:1,7,24 16:3	36:14,15 37:12	
40:14	16:9 26:1	17:9,18,19	45:5 50:18	cut 7:17
communities	47:19 48:6,6,8	34:24 35:1	53:12	cycle 42:11
6:1,10 8:2,5	48:16 49:19	57:13,15,15	counts 31:12	D
9:13,14 13:18	conclude 28:12	constitutional	49:17	Darrin 16:20
19:3 20:7	condition 55:23	8:23 18:1 21:15	county 20:1	data 7:2,5,9,12
22:11 26:17,17	conditions 56:11	29:24 41:6	22:20,20,24	8:3,3 9:8,8,10
30:6 32:17,17	conference	constitutionally	24:16 29:17	9:11,12 15:11,12
33:1,1,5,9,12	25:20	31:2	52:22,24 53:1	15:14,15,15,19
33:14 41:22	confidence	contiguous	course 43:3	
42:5,16 50:11	26:10	18:23 20:3	court 2:21 3:23	15:22,22 16:10 17:4 20:4 22:1
50:12,24 51:10	confined 28:6	29:19	4:6,7 17:10	
52:6 53:23	conflict 36:8,15	continually	18:10 19:10	22:4 33:4
54:10,23	Congress 17:8	57:6,8	cover 49:10	34:18 48:8
55:21,23 56:2	congressional	continue 38:21	covered 11:17	49:9,10,12,24
56:8,23 59:6	17:11,15 18:20	58:19	21:24	49:24 50:1,2
community	19:4 26:7	continuing	covers 5:13	52:21 53:5,6,7
12:15 15:15	connected 19:1	36:21 50:4	COVID 48:14	53:22,22
20:8,13 24:9	19:5	contributing	COVID-19 12:5	54:5,6,8,9,14
24:10 29:5,15	consequential	20:13	24:5 31:5	58:2,4,9,14
35:21 36:11	43:13,14	control 32:23	40:24	date 8:24
37:23 39:9	consider 21:3	45:12	cracking 28:3,7	Dave 2:7 5:5
41:21 43:1	41:4	convenient	craft 7:3	day 1:6 33:13
50:19 52:24	consideration	58:3	cramming 9:24	42:3
52:24 55:11	13:4 24:2,14	conversation	create 6:2 35:9	deadline 7:10
58:22	25:1 31:5	36:17 46:10	57:10,11	7:15 8:23 9:3
community's	considering	conversations	created 27:8	15:3 18:1 57:16
19:23	30:10	14:1	creating 18:2,18	57:17
	I	I	I	I

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dealing 31:13,21	describes 16:17	50:23 52:2	12:24 13:3	24:21
36:8 38:11	description	disservice 7:21	15:23 16:5	Edwardsville
dealt 41:10	32:20	distinction	23:10 26:16	56:20
debate 33:21	Despite 8:21	50:17	35:10 37:2,2	effect 17:24
57:20	detailed 6:19	district 4:22 5:2	57:16 59:5	27:16 31:4
decade 6:14	details 36:16	13:22 14:2	drawer 31:11	effectively
22:10 41:8	determine 32:7	18:24 19:9,13	drawing 10:22	20:12 30:9
decades 41:24	detriment 9:6	20:11 21:3,5,10	12:23 14:15,17	efforts 34:16
decennial 15:12	development	21:12 23:11	14:21 15:8	eight 18:4
22:3	24:23 29:5,15	54:20,22	23:9 59:2	either 27:3,3
decided 26:8	devoid 31:22	55:18,19	drawn 16:4	43:23 58:4
decision 10:2	different 6:13	56:20	20:20 27:14	elect 21:6,9
decline 22:9,15	15:6 19:8 28:3	district's 19:12	39:4	28:17 29:1
22:17 23:1	28:9 36:6	19:14 35:10	drew 16:6	37:8
decrease	43:4,15	districts 5:15	drill 48:10	elected 38:19
22:22	difficult 19:7	13:3,23 16:8	drive 38:12	38:23
decreased 31:9	dilemma 33:17	17:12,15 18:18	driven 41:23	election 9:16
dedicated 11:20	33:18	18:20,21,23	drum 55:7	21:11
deeper 48:5	diligence 25:9	19:5,19,19,20	56:18	elections 10:7
defender 33:13	26:23	19:21 20:20	dubious 50:16	electoral 20:19
define 19:7	directly 32:16	21:2,4,4,7	due 25:8 26:23	39:2
defined 39:11	disabled 36:5	26:7,19,19,20		Eleventh 2:23
definitely 32:24	disagree 52:15	26:21 27:9,14	E	emotion 55:16
definition 26:21	discontiguous	27:21,22 28:4	E 2:1,1	emotional
delay 4:10 7:4	19:4	28:7,9 35:3,5	e-mail 13:6	56:24
15:11	discourages	37:6,7 40:15	21:20	emotions 55:16
delayed 22:3	39:7	dive 48:5	e-mailing 23:13	empirical 56:24
delegates	discrimination	diverse 30:17	ear 34:8,10	employ 40:22
44:10	32:2	diversity 6:4	earlier 45:3	employee 16:21
democracy 7:21	discuss 16:24	divided 36:15	East 13:19 14:7	empower 9:5
Democrat 54:11	22:1	36:20	23:17 24:1,15	empowered
Democratic	discussed	dividing 21:1	25:13,22	40:19
16:18	34:23 43:23	documents	28:17 29:16	encourage 12:2
Democrats	discussion 11:10	58:23	34:19 37:24	encourages
10:17 11:18,19	13:21 28:23	doggone 56:6	49:6 50:10,13	26:15
57:17	28:24 32:13	doing 15:24	50:14 51:2	encouraging
demographic	33:21 35:14	25:8 37:12	52:21 53:13	6:21
12:13	37:16 42:18	41:19	56:5,16,16	endeavor 12:9
Demographic	45:18	dollars 56:1	Eastern 23:18	enforcement
22:14	discussions	door 51:13,14,14	23:22 25:3,6	55:13
demographics	58:19	doors 51:12	25:10	enfranchisem
27:22,24	disenfranchise	Doris 2:5	Ebelot 35:16	40:13
denied 30:10	9:12	draft 6:22 26:9	Ebelsizer 35:16	engage 23:9
depend 32:7	disinformation	39:16 40:6	economic 12:14	58:21
Derik 3:16	36:18	dramatically	economically	engaged 13:24
described 35:9	display 21:20	9:14	20:10	39:8 40:19
47:18 60:7	disproportion	draw 8:24	educational	engagement
	ı	ı	.	1

ALARIS LITIGATION SERVICES
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8:20 31:17	ovicting 10:22	fill 4:10	full 3:24	gives 17:19
	existing 19:22	final 18:8 26:8	_	
engaging 16:11	experiencing		function 38:23	glad 14:7,10
enhanced 24:7	30:3	finalized 26:9	funding 24:21	go 5:18 14:18
ensure 7:23	experts 9:9	39:18	Funk 35:17,19	15:2,12 16:16
10:3 11:5 13:18	53:4,20,24	finally 17:3	35:20 37:16	17:24 23:21
14:14,23	54:6,18	35:16 45:22	37:17,18 45:3	29:4,12 30:11
ensures 17:6	Extending 9:7	find 6:19 23:5	further 11:9	30:23 31:11,12
21:16	extremely	33:17 56:15	23:11 45:18	31:12,15 32:3
ensuring 42:9	13:20	first 12:6,20	58:23 59:12	32:14 33:22
entirely 7:18		18:19 23:16,22	59:17	33:23 34:1,11
entities 3:14	F	24:4 47:16	future 4:2 28:19	36:16,21 37:5
equal 6:11 17:7	fact 9:21 15:5	55:4	40:18 42:11	37:11 39:24
17:13 18:19,21	48:22 52:12	five 18:7,14		41:5 46:1,12
18:22 29:19	52:16 53:1,3	51:19 53:2,3	G	47:12 54:7
30:18,19	53:18 54:11	fix 34:18	gain 22:11	55:3,10 56:13
equality 30:16	55:22	flow 56:2	gaining 31:19	59:2
equally 20:19	factor 49:21	focused 6:21	garnered 10:16	goal 6:14 11:24
equation 50:22	factors 20:12	focuses 19:12	gather 6:1 31:15	goals 28:4
equitable 28:13	48:15	folks 14:11 16:1	31:15	going 4:9 16:15
30:14	facts 48:11 52:17	29:7 34:24	gathering	16:16 17:2
equitably 31:3	fail 57:17	39:7	32:22	25:4 26:22
equity 30:4,15	failed 57:18	follow 19:22	general 6:9 7:14	26:23 30:17
30:17,18,19	fair 6:3,11 7:23	44:14 47:10,15	27:17 31:6	36:23,24 37:1
especially 8:4	26:13 28:16	52:8	54:19	37:2 41:15
9:13 33:7 40:5	38:14 39:10	following 3:14	generally 38:6	49:9 50:3
48:18	fairly 39:21	5:13 49:16	genuinely	51:14,16,16,20
establishing	Fairmount	foresight 15:7	38:20	52:18 54:4
17:13	55:10	form 14:18 27:12	geographic 6:3	55:12 57:10
estimates 22:6	Fairview 55:17	34:5 46:12	20:2,9	good 5:20
22:8	fall 22:4	former 34:15,20	geography	24:12 25:18
ethnic 8:6 40:16	false 57:7,11	forms 28:2	19:15	34:11 38:6
ethnically 20:10	falsely 9:19	formulate 28:13	geological	39:10 42:6
evening 5:20	far 24:7,19	forth 35:7	19:22	44:6 46:5
13:18 14:6,7	farm 30:6 36:3	forward 8:9 11:9	gerrymanderi	54:16 58:4
25:18,18	farmer 36:5	11:19 16:11	26:4 27:11,12	GOP 29:17
event 36:1	fault 39:23	28:18 30:23	27:13,16,17,20	government
everybody 50:1	favor 44:5	33:3 37:6,11	28:2 35:6	26:11 32:21
evicted 51:17	federal 12:10	four 11:22 16:4	getting 27:15	39:9 50:5
evidence 57:1	17:2,8 18:22	18:6 45:22	30:8 32:3	governor 10:24
exact 44:6	20:15,17 21:14	fracturing 21:1	39:17 46:22	15:5 16:7
exactly 11:3 41:1	27:6 32:21	Franklin 25:11	58:14	17:23
44:23 45:16	40:21 48:14	25:15,19	Gill 34:1,3,6,8,10	Granite 29:1
example 39:13	58:11	28:22 29:13	34:12 35:13	granted 3:20
excellence 47:4	feel 40:8,19	free 58:24	give 6:6 16:22	4:7
exception 51:9	58:24	Freeburg 55:18	32:15 35:23	granular 15:12
exclude 33:12	feelings 52:16	frequently 58:2	51:17 55:16,18	gravity 19:14
exclude 33.12 excuse 59:14	fellow 10:17	friends 29:16	given 12:3	great 11:3 14:10
EXCUSE 33.14	.5	111 C11US 23.10	9.10.1.12.0	great 11.3 14.10

ALARIS LITIGATION SERVICES
Phone: 1.800.280.3376

14:17 32:15	60:10	hereunto 60:9	59:5,8,13	50:18 52:13
37:14 39:14	happen 14:24	hey 31:1	House-Senate	53:8,11,18
39:20 43:1	happened 15:6	high 53:9	12:7	55:5 59:19
53:18 55:2	32:20	higher 49:8	HouseDems	60:1
greater 7:24	happens 30:1	highest 48:20	13:1,2	Illinois' 22:2
greatest 51:1	happy 38:14	53:9,11,13	https 59:3	Illinoisan 38:5
Green 33:24	hard 8:5 30:5,6	highly 58:13	hundred 11:1	ILSenateRred
Greenwood 2:8	51:4 56:15	hindered 19:15	54:8	59:4
4:22 12:8,17	HDS.ILGA.gov	Hispanic 22:17	hundreds 12:1	impact 24:17
13:13,15,16	23:14	22:23 23:1	hyperbole	27:19
14:5 25:17	head 33:6	55:11	36:24	impacts 50:23
36:1	hear 8:1 11:24	historical 52:1		impasse 31:22
ground 19:16	32:16	historically 7:2	<u> </u>	implemented
31:21 51:2,3,3	heard 13:20	30:21 50:20	idea 58:13	26:15
55:6 56:24	20:12 26:20	50:20 51:21	ideals 41:2	implore 24:24
group 20:8 21:5	33:3 35:3	55:22	ideas 21:22	important 10:1
21:7,10 38:24	47:20,21 54:7	hit 24:5 33:6	identical 10:14	11:12 13:20 14:1
41:3 44:11	58:22	56:21	identifies 19:10	14:8,9 15:21
52:3 57:11	hearing 1:5	Hoffman 2:6	identify 20:7	35:1,22 38:1
groups 9:22	3:23 4:1,2,6,8	4:12,14 5:8	ifs 57:14	43:11 44:7
20:23 21:8	4:11 5:22 8:13	11:15,16 13:17	ignore 53:15,16	49:22 58:12
27:5 38:17	8:15,16 14:8	14:3,5 16:13,14	ILGA 5:12	59:12
40:13,17 43:4	16:10,12 25:1	16:16 21:21	ILGA.gov 23:6	improvement
43:15 48:8,9	25:10 28:21	23:15	ILHouseDem	42:1
48:19 49:11,15	33:21 37:17	holding 6:1	23:7	inability 24:6
49:19 50:3	45:19 46:20	20:4	III 50:18	inaccurate 9:17
52:13 54:13	46:23	Holtmann 3:17	Illinois 1:1,2	includes 5:15
57:8	hearings 5:23	home 24:20	2:22 3:2 5:21	8:20 28:14
grow 23:2	9:20,23 10:1	51:19	5:22 6:2,8,12	39:10
growth 22:19	11:22 12:5,7	homeless 8:7	7:7,8 9:16,22	including 7:7
guarantee	15:17 20:5	homes 12:22	11:6 12:11,11,20	8:5 10:16 11:1
39:24 40:22	21:17 23:6	honor 6:4	12:24 13:1,3	23:9
56:21	28:19 32:15	hope 37:9 57:3	14:9 15:16	income 8:6
guaranteed	39:13,22 43:3	hopped 56:11	16:21 17:1,7,18	incomplete
17:9	47:22 52:15	horrible 38:18	17:19 18:10,12	34:20
guess 35:18	55:3 57:7	hospital 56:13	19:18 20:22	increase 22:12
42:3	heavily 31:9	host 55:10	20:23 22:18	22:23
guided 12:9	Heights 55:17	hosting 6:7 8:13	25:12,20,22	incredibly
guidelines 17:3	held 1:5 11:23	12:8 14:6,6	26:2,12,18	35:22
29:24	12:4 17:10	36:1	27:8,10 28:9	independent
guiding 18:19	60:6	hours 1:6 43:12	29:3,17,17 31:3	7:18 9:22
guilty 46:21	help 11:11 21:6	house 1:1 4:13	34:24 35:7	10:13,17,20,23
guys 31:2 41:17	22:6 37:19	4:15 5:1,22,24	37:8 38:7,9	35:2,10 44:24
	42:9	6:5 10:19 11:18	40:21 45:13	57:10
<u>H</u>	helping 27:23	11:19 15:18	45:23 46:3,4	indicated 13:6
habit 43:10	30:20	16:18,21 17:21	47:4 48:16,21	indicative 56:16
hand 54:6	helps 20:24	19:19 49:17	49:2 50:6,16	inequity 32:2
	l	I	I	l

ALARIS LITIGATION SERVICES
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inferior 53:6	involved 26:15	56:12	26:15 55:13	38:3
58:6	45:14	killer 56:10	lead 10:5 33:4	listening 58:21
influence 21:4	involves 19:17	knock 53:7,10	41:4	Litigation 2:23
21:10,10 26:20	Iraq 36:9	53:12,14	leader 4:12 5:8	little 5:6 48:5
inform 22:6	issue 15:10,10	knocked 55:19	11:15 13:16 14:3	58:3
information	57:6	56:6	14:4 16:14 18:5	live 28:15 41:20
6:20 9:3 12:13	issued 53:16	know 6:12 8:2	21:20 23:16	49:20
26:22 29:13	issues 15:8	11:17 12:16 16:9	leaders 7:20	living 51:20
46:24 48:12	38:12 40:4	20:1 24:3,16	31:20 32:8,9	53:5
58:23	43:23	24:17 27:20	39:5 46:5	Locally 22:20
initial 17:20	issuing 49:1	29:12 30:4,14	leadership	long 10:24
input 6:1 14:16	items 11:18	31:3 32:2,3,4	31:19 41:24	look 8:9 11:9
26:8 39:18		34:14 36:2,13	leading 49:2	16:11 18:18
43:17 44:19	J	37:23 38:19	learn 6:14	19:21 20:6
59:11	Jackie 6:6 8:12	38:22 39:13	learned 39:22	30:18 31:1,2,5
insert 44:24	Jason 2:4 46:6	39:14,16,23	lease 51:19	31:10,13 40:17
inside 19:20	Jay 2:6	39:24 40:6	leave 3:14,20	41:1,2 45:15
insiders 7:17	Jeff 35:15,16	40:20,23 41:1	3:20 4:7,7	46:18 51:13
insurmountab	Jersey 5:14	41:9,13,14 44:1	leaves 30:9	52:20,21 56:3
24:4	job 38:21 56:7	45:7 46:4,8,9	legal 18:18	56:4
intel 45:8	Joel 35:17,17	46:11 50:8	legislation 6:23	looking 17:4
intentional	joined 20:11	51:4 53:4	11:3 44:22	28:18 46:5
27:17	joint 5:21 12:7	57:12,24 58:7	legislative 6:23	looks 6:13
interest 6:2	Joyner-Kersee	knowing 46:23	7:20 15:8 16:2	Lord 31:24
20:7,8,13	6:6 8:12	known 20:7	17:11,17,20	lose 22:21 32:6
32:17 40:14	Julie 10:15	knows 31:24	18:3,5 19:21	32:8
44:11 59:6	jumped 56:10	Krishnamsetty	38:2 59:2	lost 56:13
interested 12:12	June 7:10,15	45:23	legislators	lot 29:13 30:15
16:10 59:2	8:22 9:1,2	KTVI 3:16	28:13 43:6,20	43:19 47:19
interesting 45:3	14:20 15:3,9		legislature 11:1	48:15
45:6.8	18:1 34:23	L	14:19,20 15:2	lots 58:9,11,16
interests 10:9	57:16	labels 36:2	15:5 16:5 17:8	Louis 2:24 13:19
19:24 42:4	Juneteenth	language 10:14	17:19 18:2	14:7 23:17 24:1
interpretation	46:3,4 47:3	20:23 21:8	39:15 41:13	24:15 25:13
19:16	Justin 3:16	27:2,5	let's 47:6	25:23 28:17
introduce 11:3		large 21:5	level 15:13 48:14	29:16 34:19
introduced	K	largely 55:11	LGBTQ 8:7	37:24 50:13
10:13 43:7	Kamran 29:2	largest 22:12	life 36:2,7,8	50:15 51:2
44:22 45:16	Kane 22:13	late 7:5	56:12	56:17
introducing	Karen 34:3	Latinx 55:11	lifetime 51:24	love 32:9 41:20
43:10	Katie 2:9 5:3	LaToya 2:8	light 33:17	46:17
introduction	keep 31:20	4:22,22 13:13	limited 8:16	loved 56:13
43:16 44:18	54:17,18	25:17	line 38:7	loves 37:22
invested 48:16	keeping 31:18	laughable 35:3	lines 14:17,21	low 8:6 30:7
53:15	Kendall 22:13	law 11:21 18:22	26:16 37:2	lucky 55:8
investment	key 38:15	20:6,15 21:12	link 46:19,19	Lydia 2:22 60:4
48:22 58:8,13	killed 52:1	21:14,16 26:15	listen 14:11 20:5	
10.22 30.0,13	l	l ' ' ' ' '	1	

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		=0.45 = 4.7	I ———	00.47			
M	Mascoutah	53:15 54:7	N	news 36:17			
ma'am 34:9	54:22	Millstadt 54:20	N 2:1	News-Democ			
35:15	mask 36:19,20	mind 51:15	NAACP 25:12	3:17			
Madison 5:14	massive 48:1	58:15	25:13,23 27:9	newspaper			
22:20,24	48:22	Minds 58:6	28:13,18	46:24			
52:22	matter 8:2	mine 57:3	nail 33:6	newspapers			
Mah 2:7 4:24	52:12,16 53:1	minimum 11:22	name 16:20	46:21			
59:8,10	53:4,18	43:7	18:13 25:19	night 43:12			
maintain 27:23	maximize 19:23	minorities 8:6	46:7	nine 18:14			
39:4	maximized	21:1 26:14	named 7:20	ninth 18:13			
major 41:17	48:18	27:2,3,15,19	names 18:11	noise 3:19			
majority 16:6	maximum 14:23	40:16	nation 49:3	nonpartisan			
18:6 21:7,11	Maxwell 3:16	minority 5:3	national 46:3	35:2,9 41:7			
28:1 47:23	mayor 23:17,18	13:14 15:19	nationwide 7:7	normal 31:16			
makers 19:21	23:21,22 25:3	20:16,18,23	natural 20:2	34:15 51:5			
20:6 21:2	25:6,9 28:24	20:24 21:5,8	nature 24:20	north 2:23 5:2			
26:15	55:6	27:5 32:16	54:19	31:24 54:11			
making 7:15 8:3	McClure 2:4 3:4	33:1,4 53:23	Navy 45:9	notice 1:5 40:5			
10:2 12:1 13:19	3:5 5:16	54:10	near 9:11 34:14	November			
49:17 54:2,12	mean 19:3 30:4	misleading 9:3	49:13	34:14			
man 26:24	meaningful 10:4	misquoting	nearly 18:20	number 28:6			
manipulate	means 7:4,11,11	50:9	necessarily	50:10 51:18,21			
27:21	14:20 18:24	misses 7:15	14:16 27:24	54:5			
manner 10:5	27:4 30:17,19	Missouri 2:24	necessary 41:6	numbers 9:17			
33:11	31:8 36:23	mistakes 54:5	need 4:17 15:11	32:4,19,23			
map 6:3 7:15	47:12	moment 42:14	30:13,23	47:7 48:23			
8:3,22 9:1	measure 19:9	momentum	31:24 32:8	50:8,9 51:1			
10:20,22 14:18	meet 57:17	31:19	38:11,14 39:9	52:1,5			
16:6 17:21,24	meeting 3:1	money 58:14	39:19 40:3,9	numerous 5:23			
18:2,8,10 19:21	59:18 60:5	Monroe 5:14	40:19 42:6,16				
21:2 26:8	meetings 39:20	22:13	44:8 46:13,17	O			
43:16,17 44:18	member 2:7,7	months 22:4	46:19 48:10	obtaining 10:11			
44:19 57:11,17	4:24 18:13	Morrison 10:15	54:5 58:7	obviously			
mapping 7:23	members 2:2	motion 3:21	needed 4:4	37:22 40:16			
maps 6:24 7:3	4:2 11:1,2,10	move 3:22	30:20	occur 34:23			
10:13 12:24	18:4,7,14 27:5	30:23 57:4	needs 35:1	occurring 39:21			
13:4,8 14:16,19	38:2 58:1	moves 4:5	40:12 41:2	October 8:24			
14:19 15:23	mentioned	moving 33:3	nefarious 38:19	18:16			
16:4,6 17:18	23:5	multiple 15:18		offensive 33:7			
23:11 39:3,6	messed 48:13	21:8 40:9,15	neighborhood 40:1	offers 23:8			
39:16 40:5	met 37:22	49:16	1	officer 45:9			
	Metro 49:6	municipalities	neighbors 29:16	official 38:19,23			
43:7,9 44:3	50:10 52:21	19:2		oh 38:8 46:1			
46:11,18 59:2	53:13 56:5,16	municipality	nests 19:18	47:12			
59:5	middle 43:12	20:1	never 34:10	okay 29:2,4			
Mark 3:16 33:22	Mike 28:24	Muslim 29:3	new 17:20,24	33:23 34:1,10			
33:22 45:20	million 48:17,17	mute 3:18	18:2,8,18	35:12,16 [°]			
				·			

ALARIS LITIGATION SERVICES
Phone: 1.800.280.3376 Fax: 314.644.1334

				1
45:20,21	56:10	24:8,23 28:15	49:14	11:7,8 14:21
57:21	panel 45:22	28:15 31:13	places 36:9	44:20,23
once 4:2 40:5	park 55:19 56:7	32:17 36:12	45:7,9	48:23
51:24	56:22	37:7 38:13,17	plainly 36:14	politics 32:24
ones 36:19	Parkinson	39:6 40:1,8,8	plan 17:22 18:15	poll 9:17
56:13	28:24	40:11,19 41:9,11	28:14 29:23	poor 50:15
online 13:24	part 5:11 6:24	45:11,12,14	44:9	poorest 50:17
open 46:19	8:3 13:9,10	48:15 50:24	plans 20:15	population 6:11
51:12,13,14	14:9 37:4	51:6,12,14,18	play 21:13 41:10	9:9 17:5,13,16
opening 5:17,18	38:15 41:23	51:19 52:2,2	played 32:22	18:20,21 19:14
11:15 44:21	51:7,22 55:14	54:2 55:9	playing 32:24	20:4 21:12
operating 48:11	56:4	56:19 57:9	plea 37:10	22:2,5,8,9,11
52:17	participate 10:4	Peoples' 10:13	please 3:3	22:12,15,16,18
operations 36:4	12:3,21 20:19	10:20	25:14 29:6	22:21,23,24
opinion 57:3	28:20 30:8	Peoria 37:22	33:22 34:2	29:20 53:9
opponent's	56:1	41:20 43:1	47:8 58:21,24	populations
28:6,8	participated	percent 49:6	59:2	15:20,20
opportunities	12:23	50:8 52:3	pleasure 5:20	20:19 22:22
20:18	participating	56:5,16	plugged 39:21	23:2 30:7
opportunity 4:3	8:14 28:18	percentage	Plummer 2:4	portal 12:23
12:3 19:24	59:11	22:12	3:6,7 5:16,18	13:2 23:10
23:23 29:8	participation	performance	8:10,11 11:14	position 27:9
32:16 35:21	6:21 7:24 8:16	53:19,19,21	12:19 35:8	33:10,13
order 3:3 4:13	11:20 12:2	period 9:7 12:3	42:20,22,23	possible 6:22
4:16 18:17 32:7	21:17 30:5	39:17 40:7	44:13 47:10,14	11:24 19:22
outcome 21:11	particular 20:13	43:7,16 44:18	52:8,11 53:24	34:18
outdated 47:6	28:16 51:5	perpetuate	54:15 56:23	posted 5:11
outlined 44:21	particularly	50:3	Plummer's 50:7	potential 9:12
outreach 31:17	34:19	person 13:22	plural 27:4	potentially
39:19 40:3	parties 11:4 15:6	17:14 28:17	plus 53:2	15:15 40:17
outside 56:10	partisan 14:23	35:4 38:20	point 44:14,15	power 27:23
overall 22:9,17	42:4 44:9,11	person's 39:23	44:20 46:6,7	38:17,18,21
24:22	parts 9:15 18:24	pertinent 29:13	47:18 50:7	39:4 41:9
overlooked	party 18:6,11	phenomenal	51:8 57:24	45:10,11,12
6:15	27:23 38:24	49:2 54:21,22	58:5	practice 19:15
overrepresen	47:23	phone 12:1	points 19:6	24:7
48:9	pass 8:22 14:19	photograph	30:20 53:2,3	precedent 19:10
overview 16:22	17:22	3:15	policies 33:12	preexisting
	passed 10:19	picking 10:12	political 7:16,20	56:11
P	passes 14:19	11:7,8	12:14 18:6	prefer 44:10
P 2:1,1	18:2	picture 56:5	19:22 26:6	preliminary 17:4
p.m 1:6,7	passing 17:20	piece 44:7	27:23 30:13	22:1
packing 28:2,4	path 36:22	pillar 47:4	38:24 43:5	prescript 29:21
paint 54:16	pause 16:15	Pinkawa 2:22	48:24 52:14	present 2:2 3:5
pandemic 7:4	people 7:22 9:2	60:4	politically 44:2	3:7,9,11,13,14
50:22 51:6	11:24 15:18	place 20:17	politicians 8:24	presentation
52:1 55:1	16:10 20:8	45:8 47:2,5	9:4 10:7,12,21	16:17 21:19
	1	<u> </u>	ı	I

ALARIS LITIGATION SERVICES
Phone: 1.800.280.3376 Fax: 314.644.1334

president 25:11	41:7,11 42:6,10	put 3:18 7:12	recessed 59:14	40:6
25:13,20,22	42:17 44:9,21	16:18 31:11	record 5:11 7:1	releases 49:1
31:14 32:21	44:24 45:1,15	33:9 34:3,6,8	13:10 43:20	53:16
34:20	processes	44:7 56:12,20	red 36:19	releasing 40:6
press 49:1	45:12	57:8	redistribution	relevant 12:13
53:16	produce 30:18		28:14	religious 12:14
Preston 33:23	projected 22:10	Q 40.04	redistrict 29:21	religiously
33:24	22:15,18,21,24	question 42:21	29:23	20:10
prevent 20:17	prone 54:4	49:4	redistricting 1:2	rely 58:2
20:24 27:14	properly 26:14	questions 25:2	3:2 4:1,13,15	remarks 5:18
previous 29:22	26:14 33:5	25:9 35:13	5:1,9,12,21,24	11:15
48:2,7	proposal 35:7	58:24	5:24 6:9,20	remember 42:4
previously 60:6	40:10 43:15	Quinn 16:7	7:9 8:14 10:23	remind 16:1
primary 26:1	44:10	quorum 3:13	11:21 13:1,2,21	remiss 24:13
principle 17:13	proposed 6:23	quoted 52:4	14:24 16:2,17	35:23
principles 18:19	10:15 40:5	R	16:23,24 17:1	removing
20:16	43:9 49:12	R 2:1	17:2,6 18:3	44:20
Pritzker 10:24	proposition	· ·	20:15 21:15,24	renters 8:7
private 15:15	58:15	race 20:21	23:7,8,13 24:3	reopen 46:20
probably 56:8	protect 10:8	26:13 27:5	26:1,13,16	reporter 2:21
56:21	protection 27:6	Rachelle 2:3	29:23 30:11	3:23 4:6,7
problem 10:11	27:11 28:10	racial 6:3 8:6	30:24 34:22	60:5
11:6 56:4	protections	20:23 21:8	38:15 42:10	represent 7:22
problems 34:13	40:20	27:2,13,14,15	58:10,20 59:9	12:18 15:16
procedure	protects 20:22	27:18 40:16	59:13,18	29:14
16:23	proud 12:18	random 18:13	Redistricting	representation
proceed 4:11	provide 6:16	Rauner 31:22	13:7	6:11 17:7 20:16
25:5,7,14 29:6	provided 13:6	reach 24:7	Redistricting	20:22 27:15
33:22 34:2	21:21	reaction 31:8	59:1	representative
35:19	providing 9:2	real 8:22 11:6,12	redraw 17:14	2:6,6,7,7,8,9
proceedings	public 5:23 6:21	16:9	redrawing 17:17	4:14,21,22,23
3:15	7:1,17,24 8:20	realities 19:16	reduction 20:18	5:2,4,5 11:16
process 6:9,20	10:3 11:20,22	realize 15:7,21	refining 26:6	12:8,16,16
7:11,12,17 8:18	12:23 13:5,8	really 30:11 32:18 33:15,16	reflect 17:16	13:13,15,16
8:20 9:5 10:5	20:5 21:17,17	46:4 59:11	20:16	14:3,4,5 16:13
10:8,22 11:12	23:9 24:20		reflects 6:3	16:16 23:15
11:21 12:21	28:20 43:9,17	reason 33:18 reasonable	regardless 42:4	25:17 35:24
14:18,24 16:18	44:19		53:2,21	36:1 37:7
17:1,6 18:17	publicly 13:9	35:4	region 6:13 17:5	42:10 57:21
20:20 22:1	punch 38:7	reasons 15:2	29:10 46:15	57:22,23
23:9 26:2,5	purely 15:4	54:7 55:10	regularity 38:7	58:18 59:8,10
26:13,16 30:5	purpose 27:1	rebuild 36:11	Reinhardt 16:20	representativ
30:10,11,24	58:10	receive 6:10	16:20	1:1 4:18 16:22
34:21,22 35:1	purposes 58:9	received 48:1	relationship	26:6 29:9
37:4 39:2,9,11	pursuant 1:5	receives 5:9	24:2,16	37:8 41:4
39:11,17 40:11	push 24:12	receiving 27:6	release 22:3	represented
40:12,18 41:5	pushing 47:3	recess 4:17	released 7:13	5:15 19:19,24
	I	I	I	I

ALARIS LITIGATION SERVICES
Phone: 1.800.280.3376 Fax: 314.644.1334

33:5 46:14	39:17	seal 60:10	senators 5:15	42:13 46:7
48:7,20 49:16	reviewed 6:24	seat 13:19	25:16 26:7	47:13 52:10
54:3	rhetoric 43:24	second 25:10,11	send 23:11 51:12	sit 53:8,13
representing	ridiculous 58:15	25:19	51:14 55:13	site 5:12 6:17,22
5:1 33:24 34:2	right 21:19 26:3	seconds 4:9	58:24	23:8 59:3
34:4 37:20	26:12,18 27:6	secretary 18:12	sense 35:8	sitting 10:21
46:3 49:7	27:8,10 28:9	security 36:8	September 7:6	situation 33:4
Republican 2:6	29:7 34:12	see 7:7 22:16,18	15:14 18:10	six 22:4 51:20
54:10 57:9	42:18 53:1	36:17,17,18	series 12:4 17:10	slash 13:1,2
Republicans	56:19,22	43:20 44:1	serious 43:24	23:7 59:3,4,4
9:20,21 10:10	Rights 12:10,12	45:13,14 46:6	44:1	slick 32:3
33:2 44:17	20:17,24	46:9 50:24	serpentine	slightly 36:6
57:12,18	40:21	55:2 56:5	35:5	slips 46:22
reputation 38:6	Rima 29:2,3	seeing 28:23	serve 18:13	slowing 8:20
requested 8:19	risk 36:21	35:14 44:10	30:6 40:18	small 9:9
43:6	road 14:11	59:12	served 27:10	smaller 22:17
require 7:8	roads 24:22	seeking 3:14	served 27:10 serves 28:10	28:6
requirement	Robert 23:18	seen 42:1	serves 26.16 service 45:5	Smith 45:20
19:7	robust 8:19	Senate 1:1 3:1	services 2:23	smoke 57:13
requirements	role 14:15	5:9,22,23	31:23	snapshot 49:13
17:3 21:13,15	roll 3:3 4:17 31:6	10:10,13,16	sessions 40:5	Snyder 33:22
requires 6:8	rule 24:20 51:10	17:21 19:20	set 35:7 60:9	social 12:13
11:21 18:23	rules 45:11	35:9 44:17		
20:15		45:16 47:24	setting 39:15 seventh 53:11	socially 20:9 soldier 36:3
	rulings 17:10 run 36:21	59:5,18	Severin 2:7 5:5	
requiring 21:2 21:17	rural 15:20 30:6	l '	sewers 24:22	solely 20:20
resident 13:3	53:23 54:9	senator 2:3,3,4 2:4,5 3:4,5,6	shape 19:12	solution 10:11 11:5
residents 12:21	rush 50:2	l ' ' '	share 13:3 23:4	solutions 29:5
17:7 20:6	Tusii 50.2	3:7,8,9,10,11 3:20,22 4:5		29:15 30:14,14
	S	l '	26:23	•
residing 51:18	S 2:1	4:14 5:7,17	shared 41:3	solve 47:18
resources 31:16	safe 42:17	8:10,11 10:15	Sharon 34:1	48:3
32:9 58:11	safety 49:14	11:14,16 12:7,17	shine 33:16	solved 47:23
respect 57:3,3	Samer 37:20,21	12:17,18 13:5	short 16:17 39:4	somebody 34:4
respectfully	42:24 44:14	13:12,17 14:6	40:5,7	sorry 46:1
46:7	45:15,18	16:13 23:15	Shorthand 60:4	sort 38:7 39:17
respond 14:13	sampling 9:9	29:9 32:13,15	show 22:6	52:19,20
response 31:8	sampling 9.9	33:20 35:8,24	shows 22:1,8	sound 30:1
responsibility	saw 48.13 saying 28:12	35:24 42:13	side 11:2 27:16	sounded 54:15
17:20 18:1	46:8 53:24	42:20,20,22	44:16 58:1	south 5:6 53:3
rest 29:10	54:17,18	42:22,23,23	signed 16:7	54:11
restore 26:10		44:13 45:18	17:22	southern 31:3
result 17:14	says 41:15 scheduled 9:24	46:6 47:10,14	similar 10:17	southwest
results 9:17		47:14 50:7	28:4 35:8	29:10 46:14
34:13	schedules 10:4	52:8,8,11	simply 10:8	southwestern
return 42:15	scientific 19:9	53:23 54:15	single 55:7	1:2 3:2 5:21
reveals 17:4	screen 21:20	56:23 57:4,5	singular 27:3	14:9 55:5
review 4:3	57:13	57:19,21	sir 25:5 37:17	59:19
	•	•	·	1

ALARIS LITIGATION SERVICES
Phone: 1.800.280.3376 Fax: 314.644.1334

speak 23:24,24	stands 22:23	Stewart 45:21	48:2 55:7	32:12,18 33:6
29:18 36:23	59:19	45:22	56:18	33:16 46:1,2
44:15 56:23	Stanley 25:11,19	stole 26:24	supported	47:9,15,17
57:4	start 5:17 23:20	stop 9:24 31:14	10:24	teleconference
Speaker 10:18	31:14	34:16 35:6	supportive	1:7
35:18	starting 46:10	stopped 9:20	43:18	tell 8:3 54:16,23
speaking 22:14	state 6:4,13 7:5	34:21	supposed 9:3	55:15 58:5
55:20	8:17 9:15 11:21	story 8:4	40:22 49:7	ten 6:10 9:15
special 6:6	11:23 14:9,10	Stream 3:15	suppress 27:18	16:6 17:15
24:2,14 35:22	14:12 15:16	4:10	Supreme 17:10	41:14,18 50:15
35:23 36:4	17:2,5,8,11,12	Street 2:23	18:10	tend 24:10
specifically	17:15,21,21	streets 24:21	sure 6:10 24:1	38:17
24:10 52:22	18:12,21,22	strengthen	25:8 40:3 41:7	terms 58:8
53:22 54:9	19:4 20:6,14	40:20	45:19 46:13	terrible 43:10
55:20	21:12,14,18	strive 38:21	48:17 49:9,14	test 19:17
spectrum 43:5	22:9 25:12,20	stroke 54:17	49:17 54:2,12	testified 52:14
48:24 52:14	25:21 29:11	strong 31:20	57:22 58:17	53:5 58:20
spell 15:2	31:7 32:1 37:11	39:19 40:4	58:22	testify 15:18
spend 41:17,18	37:14 38:5,8,9	stronger 42:7	surrounding	testimony 5:10
spent 36:7	38:13 41:19,22	structure 30:1,2	52:5	5:10,19 6:16
spokesperson	41:24 42:6	structures 47:5	Survey 15:15	8:9 11:9 13:5,8
2:6 5:3 13:14	43:5,14 46:4	Stuart 2:9 5:3	Sustainable	21:23 23:5,12
spread 19:13	47:4,21 48:16	12:16 57:21,22	29:5,15	23:20 25:4,5
28:8	48:21,24 49:5	57:23 58:19	Syamala 45:22	28:23 32:13
spreading	52:23 53:8,10	student 36:3	Syria 36:9	33:21 37:15
40:15	53:10,14 58:13	studying 20:4	systems 24:21	42:14,24 45:4
Springfield 5:4	60:1	stuff 42:2	47:2	45:6,24
43:8,10 47:24	state's 16:23	subcommittee		thank 3:19,22
50:5 54:13	22:14	3:2 5:13	T	4:14 5:8 8:9,11
60:2	statement 5:17	submit 6:19,23	table 10:21 13:19	8:12 11:13,14,16
SS 60:1	13:13 44:22	13:5 18:11 21:21	23:19 46:11	13:16,17,21,23
St 2:24 5:14	states 7:2 12:10	23:10 59:6	take 3:3,18	14:2,4,5 16:12
13:19 14:7	17:9,14 19:18	submitted 13:8	10:20 25:1,2	16:14 23:3,14
22:20,21	27:13,21 53:12	substantially	30:17,24	23:16,23 25:3
23:17 24:1,15	statewide 22:16	18:22 29:19	31:23 44:23	25:5,6 28:19
24:15 25:13	27:24	successors	46:18 48:3	28:21,22 29:7
25:23 28:17	stating 41:2	41:18	51:7,9 55:14	29:8 32:10,12
29:16,17 34:19	stats 48:10	suffering 56:8	55:24	33:18,20
37:24 50:13	statute 19:10	suggest 28:1	taken 43:8	35:15,20
50:15 51:2	stay 30:16 38:18	suggested 33:2	takes 30:18 41:12	37:12,13,15,17
52:22 56:17	38:21 39:8,21	suggestion	talk 30:15 42:2	37:18 38:1
staff 4:2 12:1	staying 13:24	33:7		42:8,11,13,17
16:19	step 42:14	suggestions	talking 40:2 47:2 49:1	42:23,24 43:1
stake 7:14	Stephanie 29:4	23:12	54:12	44:13,13 45:5
Stan 29:13	47:15	superior 54:9	talks 27:1	45:17 47:8,9
stand 44:17	steps 39:14	support 11:4	Taylor 29:4,6,7	47:14,15 50:6
standard 19:10	Steve 2:4	33:11 43:21	Taylor 23.4,0,7	52:11 57:5,18

ALARIS LITIGATION SERVICES
www.alaris.us Phone: 1.800.280.3376 Fax: 314.644.1334

57:19,23	44:6 46:1	trends 17:5	44:17	valuable 58:16
58:18 59:10,16	49:13 55:8,15	22:6	under-serviced	valves 49:14
59:19	55:15 60:6	trickle 31:4	30:7	variations
thanks 6:6	timeline 17:17	tried 55:8	undercount	30:20
35:22,23	44:6	true 8:4 11:11	33:9	variety 48:15
theory 19:11	timely 33:11	44:2 47:7	undercounted	vary 20:14
Theresa 2:7	times 16:4 38:11	51:18	24:8,11 50:21	vax 36:20
4:24	49:16 52:14	truly 9:17 10:4	51:11,22	Venice 50:13
thing 24:4 30:3	54:8 57:24	15:16 38:14	undercounts	51:3 56:17
38:19	today 5:19 6:14	41:7 44:19	15:19,20	versus 30:16
things 14:14	6:17 8:1,14	45:1 57:11	undergo 6:9	veteran 36:5
24:20 28:3	13:11 16:8	trump 32:21	underlying	vice 25:11,19
37:3,23 38:1	21:23 23:4,17	33:8 57:13,15	38:12	video 3:15
39:18,21	25:11 29:18	trust 40:11 41:11	underreprese	view 35:4
40:20 41:9	43:2 47:1,20	trusted 39:10	30:21 48:9	virtual 12:4
42:5 43:11	58:20	truth 9:21 41:22	49:11,15,19	visit 6:17
47:22 54:19	Today's 15:10	trying 24:22	50:4,4	visual 19:17
58:12,16	tomorrow 37:1	36:8 51:9 55:7	underserved	vital 39:1
think 13:11 15:17	tonight 6:5 8:8	56:18	50:12,19 51:10	vitally 15:21
16:3 24:14	14:8,11,16 16:11	turn 4:12 5:19	54:23,24	voice 45:2 47:7
33:5,16 36:13	33:3 36:6	11:15 36:24	55:21	54:13
36:24 38:13	59:11	59:7	understand	voices 13:20
39:20 44:5,8	top 44:11 50:15	turned 7:16	18:17 24:9,17	20:12 58:22
45:4 47:19	55:1	Turner 2:5 3:8	29:20,22	vote 17:14 18:6
48:7,10,15	town 55:1	3:9 5:16 32:14	36:9 51:8	27:18,19 39:8
49:22 52:18	township 20:1	32:15 33:20	52:11	40:10 43:8,16
52:19 57:9	traditionally	turning 13:11	unfair 38:10	44:18 47:24
thoughts 20:5	48:19 49:15	turnout 48:18,18	unfortunately	48:3
23:4	51:11,21	48:20,23	7:3 38:10	voters 9:13 10:5
three 16:3	trail 53:17	49:2,5,8	UNIDENTIFIED	10:12 11:7,8
25:24 26:3,21	trans 13:9	52:19,20 53:9	35:18	21:7 27:4 28:6
27:9 50:14,15	transcribe 4:6,8	53:11,14	unincorporated	28:11 45:1
threw 40:24	transcribed	two 18:4,11 21:2	19:2	votes 9:18 10:19
thunder 26:24	3:23	26:2 28:2,10	unique 12:15	15:4 26:4
ticking 40:8	transcript 3:24	43:6 44:5	United 12:10	27:11
till 31:7	4:3	50:17 51:19	17:9 27:13	voting 12:10,12
Tim 2:6 5:4	transcripts		unprecedented	20:17,24 26:3
13:14	13:10	<u>U</u>	48:17	26:12,18 27:6
time 4:19 8:8	transparency	U.S 7:3 17:10	use 9:4,8,12	27:8,10,22
9:7 10:3 12:20	8:18 11:12,20	21:14 22:2,5	10:8 15:14,22	28:3,9 40:7,21
15:23 16:5	21:16 26:2,5	ultimate 49:5	29:21 31:16	43:11
23:13 24:4,11	26:10 43:22	ultimately 30:7	49:8,23 50:2	
25:2,4 28:20	44:3 54:1	40:12,23 41:3	54:4,5,14 58:6	
31:8 32:5	transparent	41:12 44:8	uses 10:14	W 25:11
34:20 38:3,22	38:15 39:11	un-mute 23:19	V	waiting 32:19
40:7 41:17,19	42:10,17	unable 6:16		34:12 42:15
42:8 43:7	traumatic 24:18	unanimously	valid 48:6	43:15 44:17
	•	•	•	•

ALARIS LITIGATION SERVICES
Phone: 1.800.280.3376 Fax: 314.644.1334

	1	1	1	
walked 56:18	week 39:22	X	2019 10:15 22:8	
want 8:1 9:4,20	43:6 48:1		2020 34:14	
10:5,6 23:22	weeks 8:15 10:2	Υ	2021 1:6	
26:5,7 29:12	15:19 40:9	year 12:20	24 11:23 15:17	
30:12,16 31:14	44:6	34:15 40:24	43:12	
31:23 32:6,8	Welch 10:18	51:5 55:17,22	25 15:17	
42:15 43:24	welcome 5:20	year's 15:10		
44:14 45:13,13	14:1	years 6:10 9:15	3	
45:14,19 47:17	went 46:18	16:6 17:15	30 4:9 15:3,9	
48:5 54:14	WHEREOF	24:5 41:14,18	19:8 34:23	
57:5 58:6	60:9	41:24 42:1	30th 7:10,15	
59:10	white 22:14,21	48:2 50:17	8:22 9:1,2	
wanted 11:5	22:24 36:19	yesterday 47:1	14:20 18:1	
58:17	Willie 33:23	yield 37:14	57:16	
wasn't 34:4	window 44:5	young 26:24	35 25:21	
46:19	windows 56:10	youth 8:7	37 10:16	
wasted 58:14	wish 12:2	-		
water 19:1	witness 23:17	Z	4	
watered 40:14	23:19 25:5,8	zeros 36:19	5	
way 4:23 7:23	25:10 35:17	Zones 33:24		
9:5 14:14 28:5	42:19 46:22	Zoom 1:7 3:18	5:00 1:6	
28:7 41:17	47:15,17 60:9	Zooming 43:2	50 48:17,17	
45:4	witnesses 8:17		53:15	
ways 19:9,23	8:19 11:10	0	5th 8:24 18:16	
23:8	43:19 47:20	084-002342	6	
WCIA 3:16	47:21	2:22	6:40 1:7	
we'll 4:10 17:3	wonderful 46:2	1	63101 2:24	
29:4 33:21	54:19	 -		
34:1 35:15	word 30:16	100 24:5	7	
57:4	words 4:20	105 10:19	71 49:5 50:8	
we're 4:9 12:12	work 6:2 22:7	114th 13:22 14:2	52:3 56:5,16	
16:15,16 25:4	29:21 34:16	1325 10:14 35:9	711 2:23	
25:8 30:3,19	38:11,17,21,22	45:16 47:24	72 49:6	
31:6,22 33:18	40:4 41:19	48:4	75 11:2	
34:4 36:24	58:22	14 19:18 55:9		
41:15 42:15	worker 34:15	15 55:9		
46:10,10 47:2	working 34:17	16th 8:14		
49:9,9 50:2	worth 58:13	18 10:17		
53:2 54:3,12	wouldn't 34:5	1960's 17:11		
we've 15:18	wrench 40:24	19th 1:5		
21:24 33:2	written 5:10	1st 18:10		
45:15 47:1,18	13:5,7 21:22	2		
47:20,21 51:1	23:11	2010 22:12		
53:15,20 54:7	wrong 15:24			
58:14	wrongly 7:19			
web 5:12 6:17	www.ILSenat	· ·		
23:8 59:3	6:18	2010 10.13		
58:14 web 5:12 6:17	wrongly 7:19 www.ILSenat	2011 26:3,13,18 27:8,10 2016 10:19		

ALARIS LITIGATION SERVICES
Phone: 1.800.280.3376 Fax: 314.644.1334